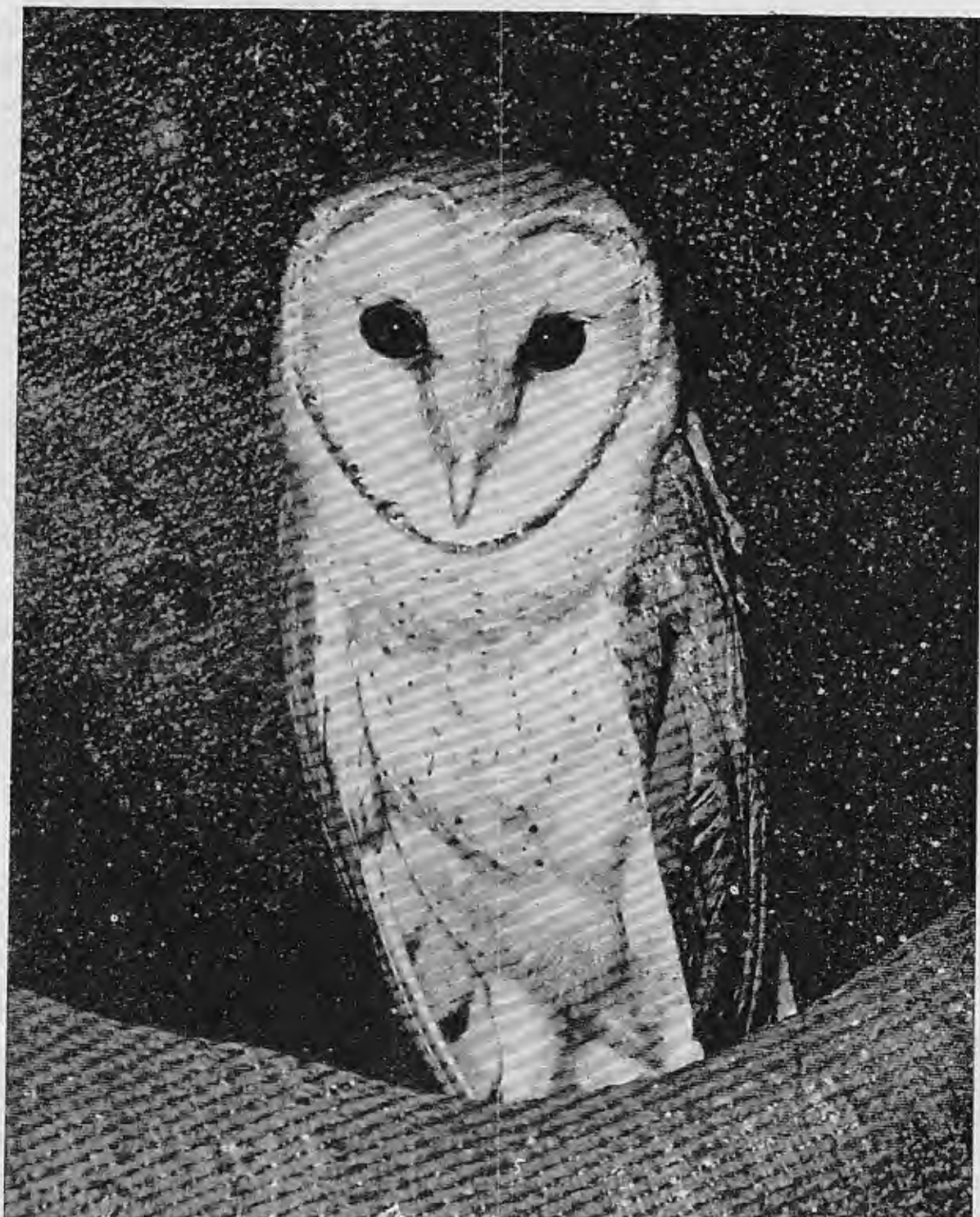


Newsletter for Birdwatchers

VOL. XXV NO. 1 & 2 JAN. - FEB. 1985



ಈ ಚಿರಸ್ಥಿರಣೀಯ ದಿನದಂದು

35 ವರ್ಷಗಳ ಹಿಂದೆ ಭಾರತದ ಜನತೆ ತನ್ನ ಆಶೆ, ಆಕಾಂಕ್ಷೆಗಳನ್ನು

ವಿಜಯ ಪತಾಕೆಯೊಂದಿಗೆ ಅಭಿವ್ಯಕ್ತಿಗೊಳಿಸಿತು

ನಮ್ಮ ದೇಶದ ಪ್ರತಿಯೊಂದು ರಾಜ್ಯವೂ ಜನತೆಯ ಆಸೆ, ಆಶೋತ್ತರಗಳನ್ನು ಪ್ರತಿಬಿಂಬಿಸುತ್ತದೆ. ಇಡೀ ರಾಷ್ಟ್ರದ ವೈಭವವನ್ನು ಸಾರುತ್ತದೆ. ಪ್ರತಿ ರಾಜ್ಯವೂ ಈ ದಿನೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ತನ್ನದೇ ಆದ ಕೊಡುಗೆಯನ್ನು ನೀಡಿದೆ. ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ಈ ನಿಟ್ಟಿನಲ್ಲಿ ಸುದೀರ್ಘ ಇತಿಹಾಸ ಹೊಂದಿದೆ.

ಅನಾದಿ ಕಾಲದಿಂದಲೂ ಕರ್ನಾಟಕದ ಜನತೆ ಸಹಿಷ್ಣುಪರರು. ಇಲ್ಲಿ ಜೈನ ಮತ್ತು ಬೌದ್ಧ ಮತಗಳು ಪ್ರವೃದ್ಧ ಮಾನ ಗೊಂಡವು. ಕರ್ನಾಟಕದೊಂದಿಗೆ ಶಂಕರ, ಮಾಧ್ವ, ರಾಮಾನುಜ ಮತ್ತು ಬಸವಣ್ಣನವರ ನಂಟು ಆಪಾರ, ಅವೋಘ. ಅನಂತರ ಮುಸಲ್ಮಾನರು ಮತ್ತು ಕ್ರೈಸ್ತ ಗುರುಗಳು ಹಿಂದೂ ಸಂತರು ಸಹಿಷ್ಣುತೆಯ ತತ್ವವನ್ನು ಪ್ರೀಮಂತಗೊಳಿಸಿದರು. ಇಂದಿಗೂ ಗುಡಿಗೋಪುರಗಳು, ಇಗರ್ಜಿಗಳು, ಮಸೀದಿಗಳು ಒಂದರೊಡನೊಂದು ಇರುವುದೇ ಇದಕ್ಕೆ ಸಾಕ್ಷಿ.

ಇದು ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ರಾಜ್ಯ, ಪರರ ಬಗ್ಗೆ ಆಪಾರ ಆದರ, ದ್ವೇಷ ರಹಿತ, ಸಹನಾಭಾವ, ಪ್ರಾಯಶಃ ಇತಿಹಾಸ ಕಲಿಸಿ ಕೊಟ್ಟ ಪಾಠ, ಗಂಗರು, ಕದಂಬರು, ಚಾಲುಕ್ಯರು, ರಾಷ್ಟ್ರಕೂಟರೂ, ಹೊಯ್ಸಳರು, ಮೊಯ್ಸಳರು ಮತ್ತು ವಿಜಯನಗರದ ರಾಯರುಗಳು ತಮ್ಮ ಪ್ರೀಮಂತ ಸಂಸ್ಕೃತಿಯನ್ನು ಇಲ್ಲಿ ಉಳಿಸಿ ಹೋಗಿದ್ದಾರೆ. ಅನಂತರ ಬಿಜಾಪುರದಲ್ಲಿ ಮುಸಲ್ಮಾನರು, ಮಂಗಳೂರಿನಲ್ಲಿ ಕ್ರೈಸ್ತರು, ಈ ಸಂಸ್ಕೃತಿಗೆ ತಮ್ಮದೇ ಆದ ವೈಶಿಷ್ಟ್ಯವನ್ನು ಲೇಖಿಸಿದ್ದಾರೆ.

ರಾಜ್ಯದಲ್ಲಿ ಕವಿಗಳು, ದಾರ್ಶನಿಕರು, ತತ್ವಜ್ಞಾನಿಗಳು, ಜನಿಸಿದ್ದು ಶತಮಾನಗಳಿಂದ ಇವರುಗಳು ಜನತೆಯ ಮನಸ್ಸನ್ನು ಸುರೂಪಗೊಳಿಸಿದ್ದಾರೆ.

19ನೇಯ ಶತಮಾನದ ಅಂತ್ಯದ ವೇಳೆಗೆ ರಾಷ್ಟ್ರೀಯ ಭಾವ ಉದ್ವಿಗ್ನವಾಗೊಂಡು ದೇಶಭಕ್ತಿ ಪ್ರಚೋದನೆಗೊಂಡಿತು. ಟಿಪ್ಪು ಸುಲ್ತಾನರಿಂದ ಕಿತ್ತೂರು ರಾಣಿ ಚೆನ್ನಮ್ಮನವರಿಗೆ ನಾನಾ ಮತಗಳ ನಾಯಕರು ಸ್ವಾತಂತ್ರ್ಯ ಹೋರಾಟದಲ್ಲಿ ಭಾಗವಹಿಸಿ ಸ್ವಾತಂತ್ರ್ಯಗಳಿಗೆ ಶ್ರಮವಹಿಸಿದ್ದಾರೆ.

ಇಂದು ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ, ಇತರ ರಾಜ್ಯಗಳೊಂದಿಗೆ ಒಂದಾಗಿ ಗತವೈಭವಕ್ಕನ್ನು ಗುಣವಾದ ನವ ಭಾರತ ನಿರ್ಮಾಣದಲ್ಲಿ ಕ್ರಿಯಾಶೀಲವಾಗಿದೆ.

ಕೈಗಾರಿಕಾ ಕ್ರಾಂತಿಯಲ್ಲೂ ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ಮುಂಚೂಣಿಯಲ್ಲಿದೆ. ವಿಶ್ವೇಶ್ವರಯ್ಯನವರಂತಹ ದಿಗ್ಗಜರು ಹಾಕಿದ ದಾರಿಯಲ್ಲಿ ನಡೆದಿದೆ. ಇಂದು ಎಲ್ಲರಿಗೂ ಶಿಕ್ಷಣ ಉಚಿತವಾಗಿ ಲಭ್ಯವಾಗಿದೆ. ಶೇಕಡ 80ಕ್ಕೂ ಹೆಚ್ಚು ಗ್ರಾಮೀಣ ಪ್ರದೇಶಗಳಿಗೆ ಕುಡಿಯುವ ನೀರು ವಿದ್ಯುಚ್ಛಕ್ತಿ ಒದಗಿಸಲಾಗಿದೆ. ಶಿಶು ಮತ್ತು ಮಹಿಳಾ ಕಲ್ಯಾಣ ಮತ್ತು ಗ್ರಾಮಾಂತರ ಪ್ರದೇಶದ ಜನರ ಆರೋಗ್ಯಕ್ಕೆ ಗಮನ. ಜನತೆಯ ಆಶಯಗಳನ್ನು ಕ್ರಮೇಣ ಈಡೇರಿಸಲಾಗುತ್ತಿದೆ. ಸಾರಿಗೆ ಸಂಪರ್ಕ ವ್ಯವಸ್ಥೆ ತೀವ್ರಗತಿಯಲ್ಲಿ ಬೆಳೆಯುತ್ತಿದೆ. ದೀನರ ಉದ್ಧಾರ, ದಲಿತರ ಕಲ್ಯಾಣಕ್ಕೆ ಆಗಾಧ ಶ್ರಮವಹಿಸಲಾಗುತ್ತಿದೆ.

ಎಲ್ಲಾ ಮತಗಳ, ಜಾತಿಗಳ, ವರ್ಗಗಳ, ಭಾಷೆಗಳ ಜನರು ಇಲ್ಲಿ ಅನ್ಯೋನ್ಯವಾಗಿ ಬಾಳುತ್ತಿದ್ದು ಅಭ್ಯುದಯದತ್ತ ಮುನ್ನಡೆದಿದ್ದಾರೆ.

ಸಾ ಧಿ ಸ ಬೇ ಕಾ ದು ದು ಇ ನ್ನೂ ಬ ಹ ಳ ವ ದೆ.

ಇಂದು ಕರ್ನಾಟಕದ ಜನತೆ ಅವರ ಗುರಿಯುತ್ಸ ಮುನ್ನಡೆದಿದ್ದಾರೆ

ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ವಾರ್ತೆ

NEWSLETTER FOR
BIRDPATCHERS

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Editorial

THE NEWSLETTER: OPTIMUM USE BY ALL FOR MAXIMUM INFORMATION AND
ENJOYMENT -- HOW ?

Kumar D. Ghorpade

"A wise old owl sat on an oak;
The more he sat the less he spoke;
The less he spoke the more he heard;
Why aren't we like that wise old bird ?"

Namaskar(a), Hello, or Hi ! -- please take your pick ! I offered my services in response to our editor's proposal (Newsletter, 24(5+6): 2) and was generously granted the opportunity to bring in a fresh outlook with respect to the aims and needs of our birdwatchers' community. Mr Futehally asked his readers to think

"about the kind of leap forward we should take" at this milestone (25 years) that his Newsletter for Birdwatchers (initiated in 1959) has just passed. Personally, I am a bit skeptical of 'leaps'; I believe that the means or technique which the good old tortoise adopted (in his race with the hare) produce, in the long run, better and more permanent gains. Before I go any further with this editorial, I trust you will all join me in warmly congratulating Mr Zafar Futehally on his praiseworthy achievement, and in thanking him for so successfully seeing the Newsletter attain its 25th year of existence. Three cheers to him!

Perhaps it will be appropriate on this happy occasion to inform readers what the developed countries think of science in India. What we think of ourselves is often "one-sided" and subjective; it helps to obtain a "second opinion". Last year (1984) two leading international journals in England (Nature) and in the United States (Science) had the following to say (among many other things) about Indian Science:

"Growth prospects for most of the less developed countries continue to deteriorate. India is an important exception. It has tripled its food production, begun to approach energy self-sufficiency, and increased domestic manufacture. It has held down the rate of inflation. The country has key raw materials and intellectual resources."

"The forgoing should not be interpreted as indicating that India has reached a high level of development. In fact, in comparison with the United States it is a very poor country with many problems."

("Indian Development Trends" — Science, August 3, 1984)

"Among developing nations, India has by far the best chance of succeeding. The doubt is not whether but when. The country's greatest asset is not its natural resources (which are nevertheless vast) but the ingenuity and articulateness of its people."

"Both in academic and applied research, India's peculiar difficulty is that first-rate institutions are so few as to be a veneer that barely conceals the prevalence of the second-rate. Sometimes it seems that the practitioners have learned the rules of science — how to submit a paper to a journal — but not the content. This phenomenon is not much disputed. What matter are the causes and the cures."

"Sheer inefficiency is a more common problem. Some complaints are almost universal and persuasive. Young people have too little say in the design of the projects on which they work."

"Petty charlatanism is another scourge crying out for banishment. There is a lot of it about, especially in the journals. When publications are as important as in India, recycling old ideas in new papers is a constant temptation."

"Letting wishes father the perception of reality is another common failing."

("Science in India: Excellence in the midst of poverty" — Nature, April 12, 1984).

I would like to think (and be told) that readers benefited by the above extracts and were informed.

The "ABSTRACT" reproduced elsewhere in this issue refers to "the assumption that laypersons cannot learn Latinized names. Thus common names are also inherently insulting." Earlier, I had tried to point out (Newsletter, 13(8): 1; 16(8): 1) that besides catering to novice birdwatchers and encouraging them to find pleasure in their new hobby, we could use the Newsletter to also inform and educate them and aid their progress towards becoming an important source of usable data on our avifauna. I re-emphasize that it is insulting to doubt the ability of our beginning birdwatchers to "graduate" using the Newsletter, which is the only widely circulated, totally ornithological, popular publication going around in our country today?

The membership of the Newsletter has remained stagnant of late and I note that many earlier subscribers have dropped out. Why? What can we do to increase

interest and make the Newsletter a medium of important information and enjoyment by one and all? I make a few suggestions and try to set an example in this issue. I will be interested in your views, suggestions, and cooperation.

- 1) The paper by Mr S. Subramanya included in this issue is a worthy example of what anyone of you could achieve in a short time, given the interest, motivation and dedication. Articles like "Ornithology in Bandipur" (Newsletter, 18(5): 3) also deserve to be emulated.
- 2) Space in any periodical costs money and though novices should be encouraged by including their observations in the Newsletter, the time has come to request contributors to prepare manuscripts/letters carefully and learn to be more precise and terse.
- 3) The sort of longer pieces that many wish to read could be covered in "Travelogues". I have set examples (14(5): 1; 16(1): 2; 17(3): 5) and invite readers to make this a regular feature of our Newsletter.
- 4) Another feature that could be included is tips on field identification of difficult bird groups like was done on harriers (Newsletter, 19(6): 11). Could one of our able colleagues do one on the perplexing warblers that visit us in winter?
- 5) A newsletter is a medium of information. Let us make it a source of news (not so much of views). Amateurs and professionals, institutions and individuals alike can submit any kind of information that their colleagues would benefit from and be interested in, such as: ongoing research projects, your profile, recent literature, bird "spots" around each town or district, book reviews or notices, interesting extracts from books or periodicals, advice on better birdwatching techniques, travelogues, names of clubs and other bird organizations, exchanges, subscribers list, field identification problems, reports and announcements of meetings such as symposia or workshops, obituaries, range extensions, first and last sightings of bird migrants, museum and laboratory news, etc., as well as your carefully considered viewpoints.
- 6) Remember that the Newsletter is NOT an official publication. Anything reported here can again be formally published elsewhere in a regular printed journal "as it is" or with modifications. Scientists please note!
- 7) While the newly emerging regional newsletters should be encouraged, it is important to have a "national" newsletter that would attempt to coordinate news and views countrywide. I hope this is what our Newsletter would hope to achieve and aim for. Regional bird clubs should subscribe to this Newsletter and have it handy for the use of its own members, who may not be able to subscribe to it individually for lack of finance. However, if they are really interested in birdwatching, I do not see why an extra Rs 15 in a whole year should be very difficult to save!
- 8) Let each of us introduce at least one new member (friend or colleague) to the Newsletter this special year. The more persons that subscribe, the cheaper, newsier and better it can become. Why don't you take the heed of Mr Lavkumar Khacher's twin suggestions (Newsletter, 20(4): 15) to solve your yearly remittance problems? Like he said, either ask your bank where you have a savings account to do this job for you each December or, put those coins you come home with (if they do not already go into your kid's) in a piggy bank each evening and use these savings to pay for your subscription(s) -- simple!
- 9) I have prepared a Questionnaire that is appended at the end of this special issue. Please take a pen and fill it in the first time you read it. Mail it to me and I will use the information to prepare a much overdue Directory of Indian Birdwatchers with an analysis of their backgrounds, opinions and such like which all of us would love to be informed of. Please do not delay -- do it today!

Lastly, I hope you all like the "look" of this issue of our Newsletter. I have myself cut the stencils and would be only too pleased to continue doing this portion of the mechanics of production of the Newsletter, if requested to. The

editor and I are neighbours on adjacent farms outside Bangalore and ought to very easily complement each other. However, "pretty faces" and "good looks" do not, and cannot hide real defects. The substance in the Newsletter will depend on the cooperation and effort of its readers and will reflect their competence and ability. Without your assistance, any editor will not be able to do justice to your aspirations and expectations. The Newsletter is a joint responsibility — let us work together.

TAILPIECE: "Remember that the most beautiful things in the world are the most useless; peacocks and lilies, for example." — JOHN RUSKIN

HUNTING AND FEEDING HABITS OF THE REDHEADED MERLIN, FALCO CHICQUERA

S. Subramanya

The Redheaded Merlin (Falco chicquera) is one of our uncommon falcons and very little is known about the life habits of this elegant species, especially its hunting and feeding behaviour. I had the opportunity to study a pair of merlins in Rajajinagar, a residential colony on the outskirts of Bangalore, during a nesting season (see Newsletter, 20(2): 3; 24(5+6): 5; J. Bombay nat. Hist. Soc., 79: 412). Presented here is a summary of my observations on the hunting and feeding behaviour of this pair made over a period of ten months during 1979-1980, from a roof-top close to the nest-tree.

The hunting methods of merlins were described in the HANDBOOK (1: 359-360), in T.C. Jerdon's BIRDS OF INDIA and in COMMON BIRDS (p. 43) by Salim Ali and Irfan Futehally, as hunting in concert, swooping down on birds fallen to gunshot and stampeding concealed prey. These are observations possibly made on roaming pairs either far away from their chosen nest-site or outside of their breeding season. In the pair I studied, the male usually hunted by himself. The methods adopted can be broadly categorized into the following four types — 1) perch-to-site hunting; 2) search hunting; 3) hawking; and 4) pursuit hunting.

In perch-to-site hunting (Fig. 1), the male, perched on top of the nest-tree, kept looking around keenly. On sighting a flock of House Sparrows (Passer domesticus) foraging on the ground, far away from the nest-tree, he dived at them. Commencing his dive by flapping his wings, he glided down the rest of the way at great speed to a point almost above the chosen prey bird in the flock. Once near his prey, the merlin extended his talons forward and grabbed his victim as he shot past the flock, in a flight angling upward. By now, other members of the sparrow flock, noticing the falcon, scattered in a zig-zag flight. If they happened to be foraging near a patch of Congress Grass (Parthenium hysterophorus), they would dive for cover into this plant stand. In case the merlin missed his victim on the ground, he immediately tried to capture one of the sparrows flushed by his attack. This, however, usually ended in failure as the merlin failed to match the manoeuvrability of the

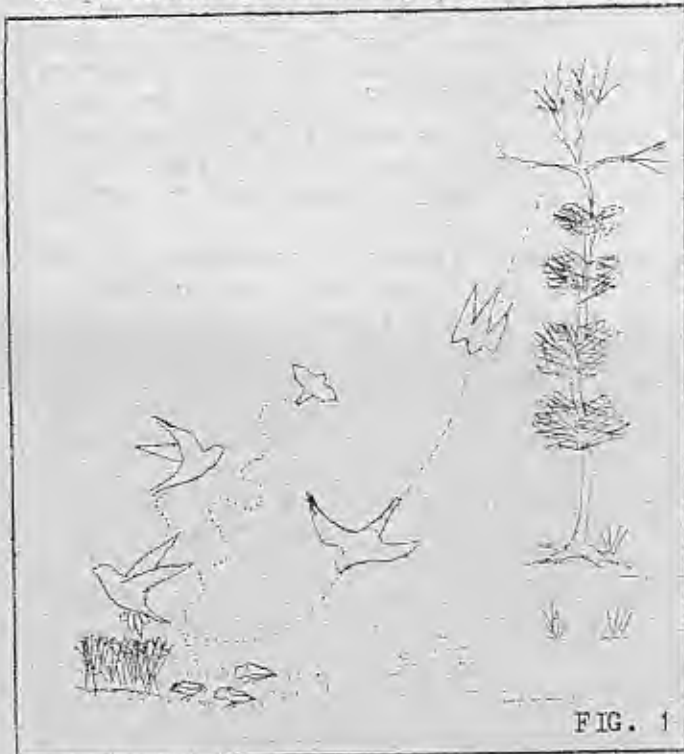


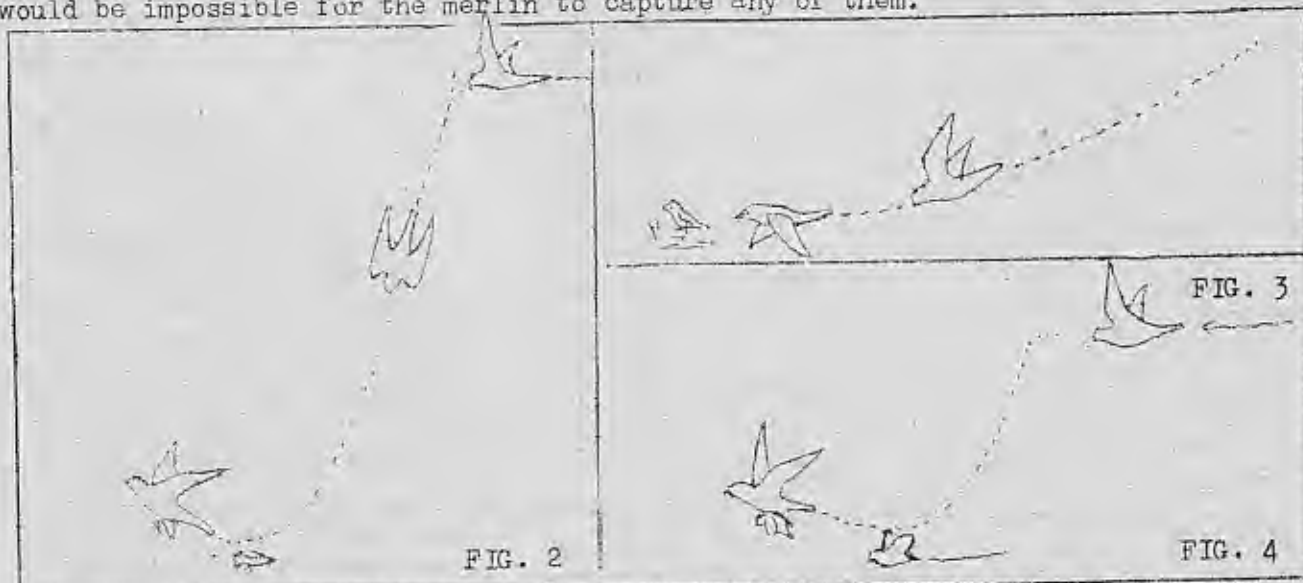
FIG. 1

smaller sparrow. On a few occasions, the female was seen accompanying the male on such hunts, flying a little behind him. While the male aimed at his chosen victim on the ground, she tended to concentrate on a member of the sparrow flock flushed by the male's attack.

During search hunting (Fig. 2), the male went out on random search flights over his foraging areas. On sighting his quarry foraging on the ground, he stooped with closed wings at tremendous speed and lifted his prey with his extended talons before angling upward. Once, while scouting one of their foraging grounds*, the pair was observed hunting in concert (Fig. 3), as described in the HANDBOOK (1:360). Flying close to the ground at an incredible speed, with the male in lead, the pair was seen dashing at a sparrow-sized bird (unidentified) on the ground, but the bird found enough time to dive into a bush.

The third method, hawking (Fig. 4), involved swooping down on flying prey. Hawking was usually noticed while the male was on his search flights. A few House Sparrows and a Large Pied Wagtail (*Motacilla maderaspatensis*) were taken by this method, but the latter bird managed to escape. Once, a Striated Swallow (*Hirundo daurica*), which was itself hawking around the merlins' nest-tree along with a number of Common Swallows (*Hirundo rustica*), was captured by the male by diving down from the lookout-cum-feeding perch above.

Pursuit hunting (Fig. 5), the most impressive of all the methods, was adopted by the male to prey upon flocks of sparrows on their return flights to roosts in the city in the evenings. In doing so, the merlins tended to become marginally crepuscular. At the beginning of the hunt, the male kept looking around for small flocks of sparrows returning from their feeding grounds in the surrounding countryside. On sighting a flock, the male left his perch on the tree and circled wide to get behind the flying sparrows. From a position of about 150m behind the flock, the pursuit began. Flying very rapidly, the male kept close to the roof-line of the houses, while the sparrows flew well above the roof-tops. In a few seconds, the male dramatically reduced the distance between himself and his flying prey. The sparrows sensed danger only when the merlin came within about 8-10m from them. But, by the time the alarm call was given, the male merlin was already shooting up in an oblique flight towards the confused sparrows to grasp a bird at the rear end of the flock. If the sparrows managed to sight the merlin earlier, they immediately dived down, before he could reach them, to scatter among the houses where it would be impossible for the merlin to capture any of them.



* The territory defended around the nest-tree extended to a radius of about 100m. The foraging grounds were separate, more extensive and scattered, and were not defended.



FIG. 5

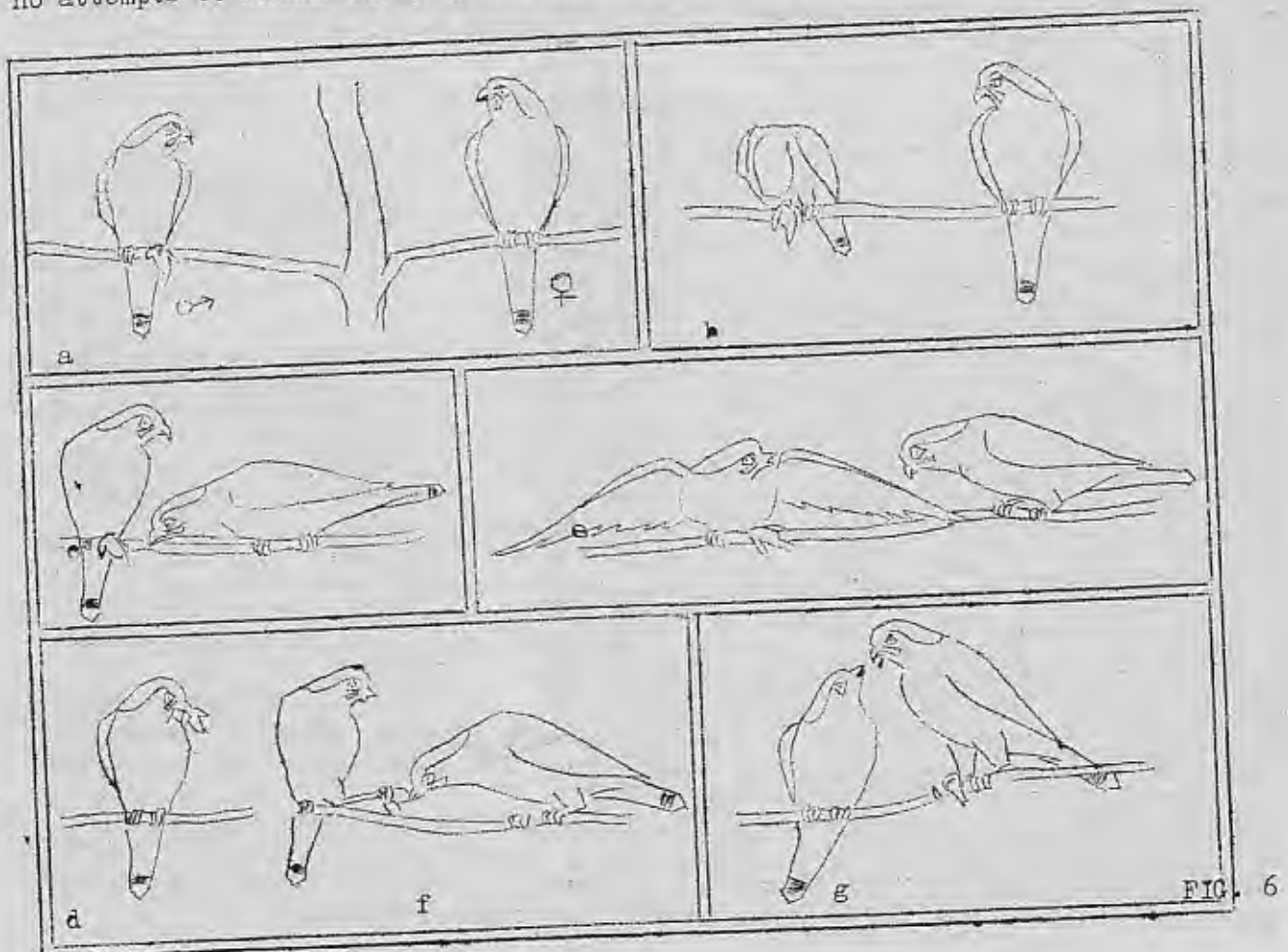
The female stopped hunting on her own, or accompanying the male, eight weeks before she laid eggs. Three stages were noticed with respect to her hunting activity during her pre-oviposition period. In the first stage, both sexes left their nest-site after the young of their previous brood became independent. They spent most of the daytime away from their nest-site, assuming a wild, roaming state, each bird hunting its own prey, or both hunting in concert. In the second stage, the merlins started frequenting their old nest-site about 20 weeks before egg-laying and the same hunting methods used in the first stage were continued. The third stage began once mating occurred and, presumably, once the ovaries started developing. The female stopped hunting or accompanying the male to hunt, presumably because the developing ovaries increased her body weight and restricted her ability to hunt. Even then, in the early third stage, she was seen bringing prey to the nest-tree in the early mornings, when the pair returned to its nest-site from the roost*.

Since the female ceased to hunt weeks before egg-laying, the male took full responsibility for procuring food for both of them. She remained at the nest-site, sitting on the lookout perch and closely followed the progress made by the male during his forays when he was within sight, or waited for him to return when he went out foraging at greater distances. The moment she sighted the wriggling or dangling form of the prey in the talons of the returning male, she flew out to meet his approaching form when he was about 200m from the nest-tree. Once with the male, she took a right-about-turn and came flying behind him. When they were very close to the nest-tree, she overtook the male and landed on a horizontal feeding perch at the top of the tree, as if inviting him to sit next to her (Fig. 6a). If, however, he chose a different perch, she flew over to settle close to him. While landing with his prey, the male always uttered a high-pitched scream "kuk-reee... kuk-reee..." repeated several times, before he either settled down to neck-bite to kill the prey, if alive, or to start plucking the victim after having fed on its head (Fig. 6b). With her head held low and crouching slightly, the female slowly moved up to the male (Fig. 6c) and snatched the prey from his talons soon after landing, or, she waited patiently until the prey was "dressed". This snatching process was vehemently protested by the male by a more piercing high-pitched scream "kuk-rreeee.... kuk-rreeee...." once again repeated several times.

* Until the eggs were laid, the pair always roosted far away from the nest-site, but, after egg-laying, the female roost-incubated the eggs, while the male flew away to roost somewhere else. On June 7, 1980, I observed another pair of these merlins roosting in the thick canopy of a 40ft tall jamun tree (*Syzygium cumini*) in Mandya District of Karnataka. The local residents, with whom I had left word, informed me later that the merlins came to roost for about a week only and were not seen during the daytime anywhere in the vicinity.

The male often picked up the prey in his beak and moved away from the female (Fig. 6d) or shifted over to another perch, or, he mantled (Fig. 6e) in defence by stretching both his wings horizontally. Most of the times, the female managed to snatch the prey, and often the final act of snatching entailed a great deal of tugging at the prey by both sexes (Fig. 6f). Once the prey was secure in her custody, she started to pluck it, or, if it was already dressed by the male, she tore it to feed on small morsels. Now, it was the turn of the male to side up to the female, and standing close to her shoulder, he waited expectantly for her to pass some of the prey morsels to his waiting beak (Fig. 6g). He received each morsel by stretching himself a little towards the female's beak. This process of sharing continued until the prey was completely devoured. Occasionally, when only a little was left of the prey, the male "stole" some meat right from out of the female's talons to feed on it by himself. As the egg-laying day approached closer, the female even stopped flying out to meet the male returning from a hunt, but no sooner had the male arrived, she landed close to him to snatch the prey. While sharing, the female always consumed more than what she gave the male. In this connection, it may be pointed out that Salim Ali (HANDBOOK, 1: 360) obtained from the stomachs of a pair of merlins shot simultaneously, the right and left legs, along with other remains, of a Jungle Longtail Warbler (*Prinia sylvatica*), which had evidently been shared by the pair.

Though the majority of the prey birds brought in by the male merlin were shared by the pair, in very few instances were two extreme cases observed — 1) that of the female depriving the male of his share and feeding on the entire prey by herself, and 2) that of the male either keeping the female away, or moving away from her to feed by himself. There were also a few occasions when the female made no attempts to snatch the prey and the male devoured the entire prey bird.



Once finished with the prey, the birds rubbed their beaks on the feeding perch, indulged in body maintenance activity, slept a little with one foot tucked into the belly, and chased intruders* that ventured close to the nest-tree.

The above mentioned feeding behaviour changed, once the female started incubating her eggs in the last week of December, 1979. Usually, whenever the male returned with a prey and landed on the feeding perch, which was above the nest, uttering piercing screams, the female continued to incubate her eggs and did not bother to leave the nest to snatch the prey. Soon, the male started plucking his victim and, from time to time, looked down at the incubating female and uttered a shrill "kuk-rrreeee", once or twice. When his calling did not elicit any response from her, he continued to dress the prey or started feeding on it, again calling to her intermittently for some more time. He then picked up either the completely dressed, or partially eaten, prey in his beak and descended down to the nest. Standing at the edge of the nest, he offered the prey to the female and both of them then shared the prey and its remains.

Here again the female, on a few occasions, left the nest and flew over to the feeding perch to snatch either the freshly killed or the partially dressed prey from the male. Also, if any intruders ventured close by while the male was eating the prey, the female readily dived at the intruder and returned to the feeding perch after chasing it away, and snatched the prey from the male. The male, after a little sharing, or, at the end of sharing, or, when deprived of his share, descended to the nest to incubate the eggs. The female rested on the feeding perch, preened and stretched herself, before flying down to the nest to resume incubation after pushing the male out of the nest.

There was no opportunity for me to observe whether both sexes shared the prey when they were in the wild, roaming state, after the young became independent. It would have been interesting to know of the state of development of the ovaries of the female bird of the merlin pair and the month in which they were collected by Salim Ali (HANDBOOK, 1: 360).

BIRD LITERATURE

Kumar D. Ghorpade

Birds are one animal group that have been very popular objects of study by man. Consequently, there is an enormous amount of published information on them. Much is known about their systematics, evolution and biogeography, besides on several aspects of their structure, function, development, life-history, behaviour and ecology, but much more still remains to be discovered and studied. Being living beings, birds are dynamic and thus subject to evolutionary change and adaptation. There is no end to our study and understanding of these fascinating creatures, uniquely clothed in feathers of every hue, and, of their living environment. Therefore, any generalizations are dangerous and should be avoided. What is true of one species in a particular area will not necessarily hold in a different region. Scientific method developed and perfected over the years through experience in the field and by experiment in the laboratory was necessary for us to accumulate factual data and store it for our use.

Ever since Le journal des scavans was first published in France on January 5, 1665, other scholarly journals have been multiplying to absorb the increasing number of scientific papers being written by an ever increasing number of workers, both professional and amateur. At the present time, around 1500-2000 individual papers on birds are appearing all over the world each year. These are published

* A pair of Pariah Kites (Milvus migrans) had their nest half-way down the tree atop which the merlins had their nest. The kites were attacked by the merlins whenever they approached the nest-tree or flew out of their nest. The kites adopted certain evasive tactics to escape the sharp talons of the attacking falcons.

The male often picked up the prey in his beak and moved away from the female (Fig. 6d) or shifted over to another perch, or, he mantled (Fig. 6e) in defence by stretching both his wings horizontally. Most of the times, the female managed to snatch the prey, and often the final act of snatching entailed a great deal of tugging at the prey by both sexes (Fig. 6f). Once the prey was secure in her custody, she started to pluck it, or, if it was already dressed by the male, she tore it to feed on small morsels. Now, it was the turn of the male to sidle up to the female, and standing close to her shoulder, he waited expectantly for her to pass some of the prey morsels to his waiting beak (Fig. 6g). He received each morsel by stretching himself a little towards the female's beak. This process of sharing continued until the prey was completely devoured. Occasionally, when only a little was left of the prey, the male "stole" some meat right from out of the female's talons to feed on it by himself. As the egg-laying day approached closer, the female even stopped flying out to meet the male returning from a hunt, but no sooner had the male arrived, she landed close to him to snatch the prey. While sharing, the female always consumed more than what she gave the male. In this connection, it may be pointed out that Salim Ali (HANDBOOK, 1: 360) obtained from the stomachs of a pair of merlins shot simultaneously, the right and left legs, along with other remains, of a Jungle Longtail Warbler (*Prinia sylvatica*), which had evidently been shared by the pair.

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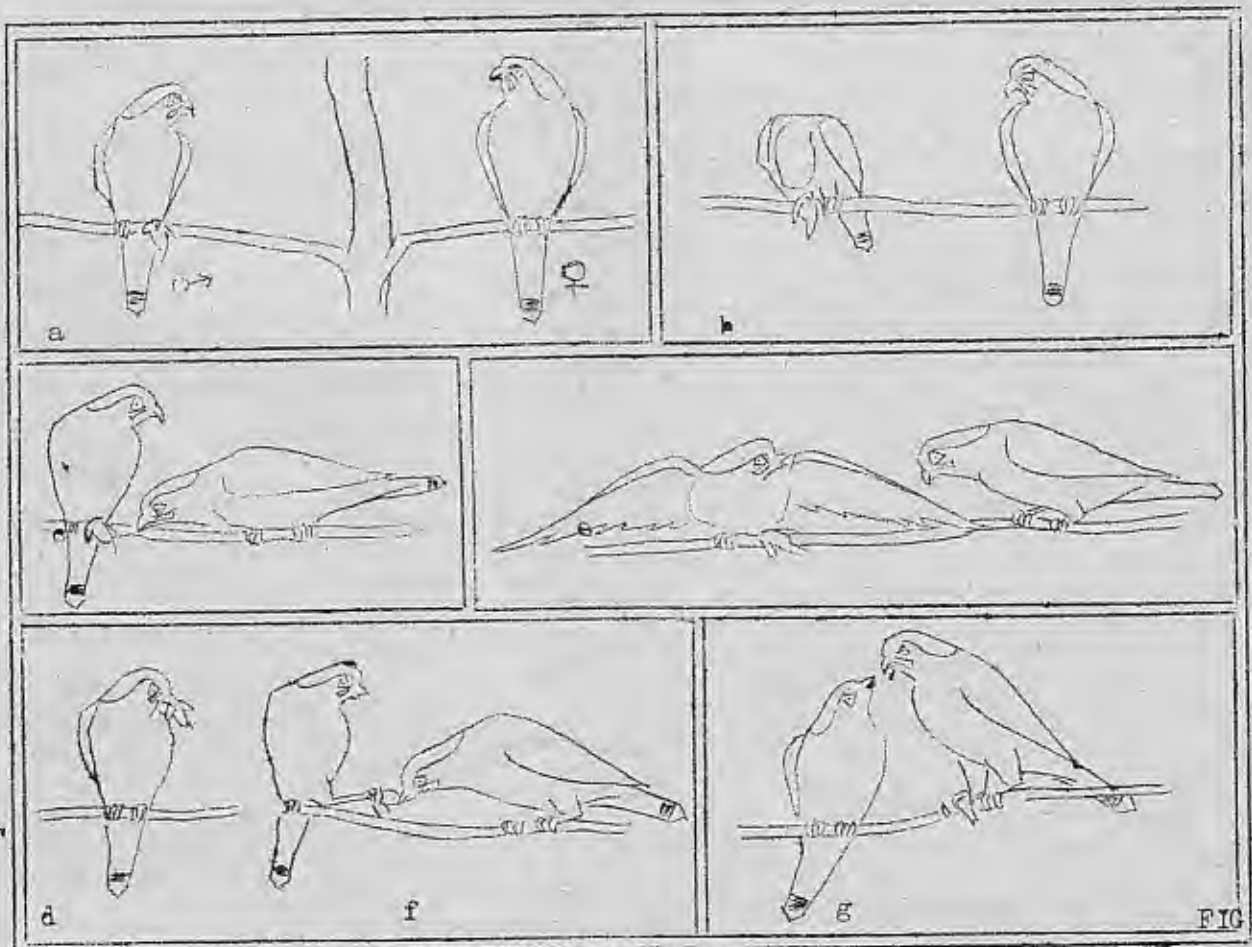


FIG. 6

in over 250-300 scientific journals, both specialist and generalized. If we count the other local bird periodicals and newsletters, we become aware of a staggering number of printed/mimeographed outlets for bird information. And, don't forget the books! From popular field guides to college texts, these threaten to overwhelm the novice and bird enthusiast.

I have tried to remind or inform readers where we stand with respect to the bird literature today. A proper perspective and awareness will help us use our time and interest more efficiently. Half-truths and misinterpretations are dangerous and should be carefully avoided. I could do no better to emphasize this than by reproducing the following quotations:

"To know that we know what we know, and that we do not know what we do not know, that is true knowledge." — H.D. THOREAU

"A little learning is a dangerous thing;
Drink deep, or taste not the Pierian Spring."

— ALEXANDER POPE

In the subsequent issues of the Newsletter that I will be asked to edit, I will commence listing recent bird literature from our subcontinent, but will also include extra-limital papers that are of general interest and application to our birdwatchers. Here, I list 1) the major bird journals, and 2) a cross-section of current papers dealing with various aspects of bird study — if only to inform our readers of the variety and trends of recent research in publications. Someone has said (I think it was Confucius) that knowledge is of two kinds: One is what we already know, and the other is where to find what we do not know. Information is a necessary resource and the key to progress. There is no reason to be overawed or scared of scientific data. I can help you, to the best of my ability, to grapple with this sea of knowledge. Help me to do this and in turn, help yourselves.

The major bird journals all over the world are: ARDEA (Arnhem, the Netherlands); AUK (Ithaca, New York, USA); AVIAN DISEASES (College Station, Texas, USA); AVIAN PATHOLOGY (Houghton, England); BIRD BEHAVIOUR (Baltimore, Maryland, USA); BIRD STUDY (Tring, England); BRITISH BIRDS (Biggleswade, England); CONDOR (Ithaca, New York, USA); EMU (Moonee Ponds, Australia); IBIS (London, England); JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN VETERINARY MEDICAL ASSOCIATION (Schaumburg, Illinois, USA); JOURNAL OF THE BOMBAY NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY (Bombay, India); JOURNAL FÜR ORNITHOLOGIE (Frankfurt, Germany); JOURNAL OF FIELD ORNITHOLOGY (Manomet, Montana, USA); ORNIS SCANDINAVICA (Copenhagen, Denmark); OSTRICH (Johannesburg, South Africa); PAVO (Baroda, India); RECORDS OF THE ZOOLOGICAL SURVEY OF INDIA (Calcutta, India); and WILSON BULLETIN (Ann Arbor, Michigan, USA).

The following are some of the recent papers on birds that have appeared in the above mentioned specialist bird journals as well as other more general periodicals. The references are not listed in alphabetical order of authors but a glance at them should give an idea to the reader as to the various aspects of bird study that are currently being researched. Only the first page of each article is cited.

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BIRDS HARMFUL TO SINGHARA CULTIVATION

D.F. Singh & S.P. Sharma

Trapa bispinosa Roxb.* is a common aquatic plant cultivated in most of the water bodies around Jabalpur (Madhya Pradesh). It is commonly known as "Singhara" after its fruit, the water-chestnut. The fruits are eaten raw or are ground into flour for making a variety of preparations, especially on religious occasions. It is now gaining importance as a staple diet of poor fishermen who cultivate this crop in addition to fishing. This supplements their meagre income derived from fishing alone.

Data on the insects harmful to this crop is available, but similar information regarding birds was lacking. Hence, a study was made to find out if birds also affect this crop. Two ponds, Balsagar and Burhagar, near Jabalpur, were selected for our study. Burhagar tank is around 70 ha in area and situated at an altitude of 393m. The depth of water in it varies from 1 to 3½m. Balsagar tank is at 402m and has a water spread of about 65 ha. Extensive singhara cultivation is done in

* The correct scientific name of singhara is *Trapa natans* L. var. *bispinosa* (Roxb.) Makino vide K.N. Gandhi in C.J. Saldanha & D.H. Nicolson (1976) *Flora of Hassan District, Karnataka, India* (Amerind Publ. Co. Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi). It belongs to the plant family Trapaceae and is a native of India and Sri Lanka. -- Guest Ed.

these tanks. Weekly field observations were made on the birds affecting this crop.

The crop spans a period of 8-9 months. While harvesting, a part of the nuts are kept as seed material for the next crop, in February. Flowering takes place in late September or early October and the fruits develop under water and are ready for picking by the first week of November. The yield varies from 400-600 kg/ac. On the basis of the damage caused to singhara, birds have been identified as either indirectly or directly harmful.

Birds indirectly harmful: It was observed that the Openbill Stork (Anastomus oscitans) and the Painted Stork (Ibis leucocephalus) caused mechanical damage to young Trapa seedlings during February-March. These birds moved about in groups of 5-6 amongst the seedlings and searched for food. They probed the muddy bottom of the tank by bending their necks and opening their mandibles. They trampled and uprooted the seedlings and caused substantial mechanical damage. They were seen only during the early mornings (0600-0800 hrs) and late evenings (1700-1900 hrs) in the crop areas. These birds did not eat the crop. Although these storks were present throughout the year in the two tanks under study, they caused damage to singhara only in February and March when the crop was in the seedling stage and liable for mechanical damage being tender and delicate during this stage. As the plant matured it became more sturdy and then could withstand the movement of these storks. The fact that these birds do not consume the crop but only damage it mechanically, keeps them out of the food web.

Birds directly harmful: Three species, namely, Purple Moorhen (Porphyrio porphyrio), Pheasant-tailed Jacana (Hydrophasianus chirurgus) and Bronzewing Jacana (Metopidius indicus), were observed eating flowers and tender leaves of singhara. Their damage was observed throughout the crop season and at all times of the day. These birds also collected singhara leaves and other aquatic plants to build their nests. The Purple Moorhen also destroyed the nuts.

It is inferred from the foregoing account that the above mentioned birds are indirectly or indirectly harmful to singhara cultivation, but before branding them as pests, it will be necessary to have a qualitative and quantitative analysis done of the stomach contents of the concerned species.

C o r r e s p o n d e n c e

COMMENTS ON EYE COLOUR IN THE KOEL, EUDYNAMYS SCOLOPACEA

B.M. Parasharya

With reference to a note on eye colour in the Koel (Eudynamys scolopacea) by Ranjit Daniels (Newsletter, 24(9+10): 13), I would like to draw attention towards similar instances where the dark brown coloured iris of a juvenile bird turns red or orange-red when the bird acquires the adult plumage.

The first example is the Crow-Pheasant (Centropus sinensis) of the same family, the Cuculidae. Like the Koel, the iris of the juvenile Crow-Pheasant is grey which turns to bright crimson in the adult. In the Blue Rock Pigeon (Columba livia), the greyish iris of the juvenile turns orange in the adult. The juvenile Redwattled Lapwing (Vanellus indicus) has a brown iris, which becomes red in the adult stage.

Such examples could be numerous. The resemblance of the colour of the iris of the Koel nestling with that of its foster parent birds could serve as a sort of mimicry, but, it could just be coincidental. The Crow-Pheasant, which is a non-parasitic cuckoo, also shows a similar pattern. This colour change could be a physiological phenomenon rather than an adaptation by the parasitic Koel. When the Koel nestlings grow older, there are many other physical characters on the basis of which they could identify individuals of their own kind. In the family Cuculidae, many species are quite distinct and they do not breed communally as do

gulls. Therefore, in my opinion, the eye colour should play a negligible role, if at all, in species recognition in koels.

Profile

ZAFAR FUTEHALIY

I was born on 19th March 1920 at Andheri, Bombay. I took a degree in Economics at St. Xavier's College, Bombay. For a living, started the DYNACRAFT MACHINE COMPANY in 1942 with my brother and cousin, which grew into a leading materials handling manufacturing company, with an output of Rs 7 crore a year. Being a family concern, I was permitted to pursue conservation activities. In 1959 started the Newsletter for Birdwatchers. In 1961, became Honorary Secretary of the Bombay Natural History Society and remained in that position until 1973, when I moved to Bangalore, to avoid the pollution of Bombay.

In 1965, played a part in organizing a meeting of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and natural resources (I.U.C.N.) in New Delhi. In June 1966 was elected a member of their Executive Board. In 1967, I was invited to participate in the Short Course on Management of National Parks and Equivalent Reserves in the United States. During this Course, I visited several National Parks in the Rocky Mountains region. In 1969, I was elected Vice-President of the I.U.C.N. at their General Assembly meeting at New Delhi. Remained Vice-President for six years and during this period was actively associated with conservation projects of the I.U.C.N. In 1972 I was invited to chair some sessions of the Second World Conference on National Parks at the Yellowstone National Park (U.S.A.). Gave the Keynote Address on "Conservation in the World of Rising Expectations" at Banff National Park, Alberta (Canada), in the same year.

I have been a member of the Species Survival Commission and the Commission on National Parks and Protected Areas of the I.U.C.N. for several years, and attended the C.N.P.P.A. meeting in Australia in 1979. I have also been a member of our National Committee on Environmental Planning and Coordination since its inception in 1972 and now of our National Environmental Advisory Committee. Received the Padma Shri award in 1970, the Order of the Golden Ark in 1980, and the Karnataka Rajyotsava award in 1983.

Abstract

Murphy, D.D. & Ehrlich, P.R. (1983): Crows, bobs, tits, elfs and pixies: The phoney "common name" phenomenon. J. Res. Lepid., 22(2): 154-158.
(Dept. Biol. Sci., Univ. Stanford, CA 94305, U.S.A.)

Arguments are presented against use of common names by lepidopterists. Common names: 1) are not universal; 2) neither serve as succinct labels nor clearly define relationships; 3) are language specific, and therefore hinder communication among scientists; and 4) often have been concocted, mainly at publishers' requests, on the assumptions that laypersons cannot learn latinized names. Thus common names are also inherently insulting.

Notices

PROJECT FINANCE: The Editor, Mr Zafar Futehally, will entertain appeals for studies relating to birds and specific habitats. The study should be aimed at conserving habitats using birds as indicators. A sum of Rs 500 will be made available to anyone proposing a worthwhile project.

BIRD LITERATURE: Dr Kumar D. Ghorpade, P.O. Box 2564, Bangalore 560 025, would be pleased to receive offers of bird books, etc. (incl. Newsletter) for sale.

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BARN OWL (TYTO ALBA)

Cover Picture: ~~BARN OWL (TYTO ALBA)~~ — Courtesy E. HANUMANTHA RAO

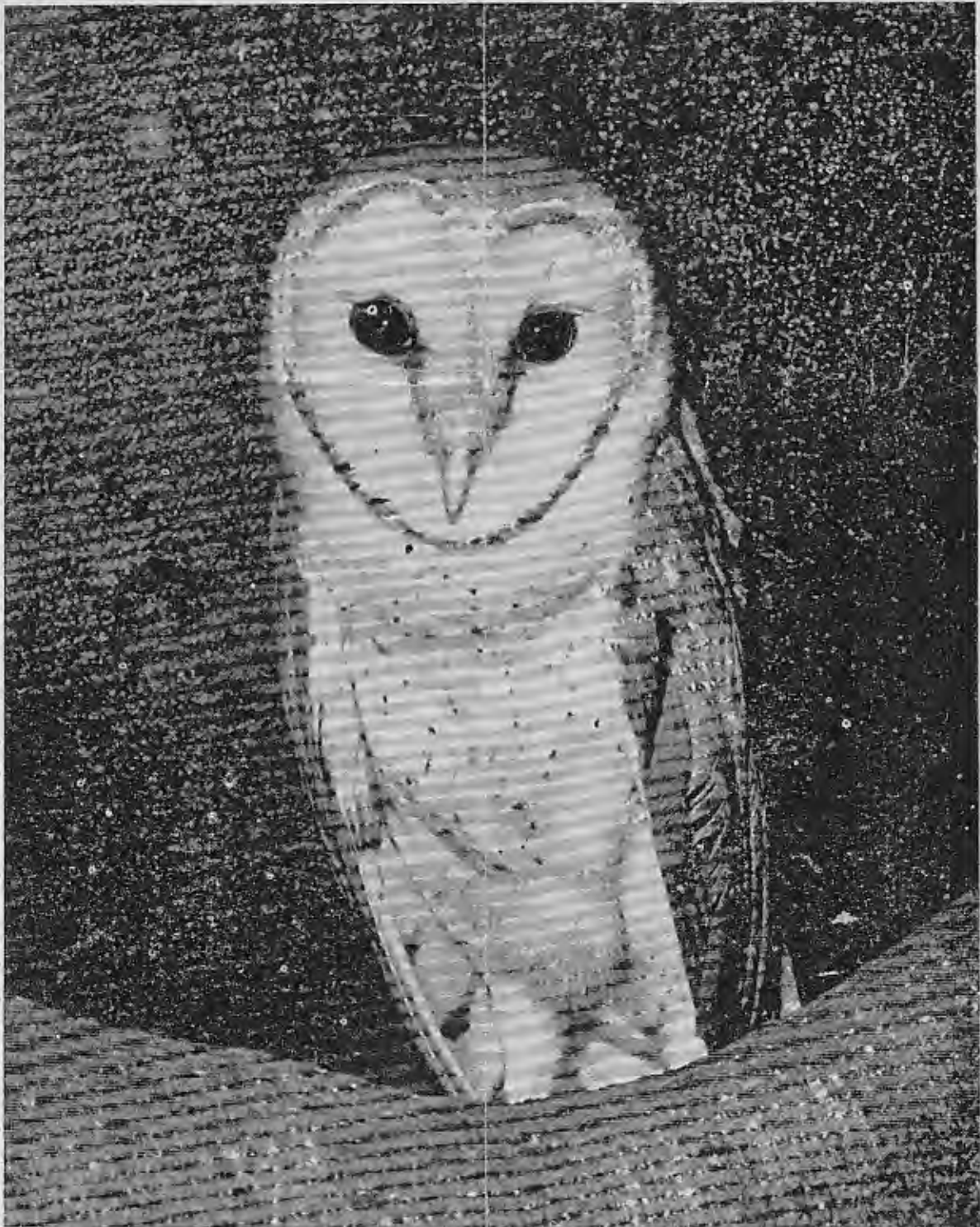
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Newsletter for Birdwatchers

VOL. XXV NO. 3 & 4 MAR. - APR. 1985



1981-1982
1983-1984
1985-1986

1981-1982
1983-1984
1985-1986

PACHMARHI

THE HILL RESORT OF FLOWERS AND FALLS

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D. I. P.

DIRECTORATE OF INFORMATION & PUBLICITY
GOVERNMENT OF MADHYA PRADESH

NEWSLETTER

FOR BIRDPWATCHERS

Vol. XXV No.3 and 4

March - April 1985

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- Progress on the Questionnaire for Birdwatchers by Kumar D. Ghorpade.
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Editorial:

Bird hazards to aircraft: The First Annual Report (1982-83, entitled: Ecological Study of Bird Hazards at Indian Aerodromes has been published by the Bombay Natural History Society. The investigators were Salim Ali and Robert Grubb. One would have thought that an investigation of this kind could lead to little practical result apart from more data on the species of birds involved in collisions, the favoured height locations of various species and so on. But the report touches on such aspects as the vegetation cover alongside runways, the complex of insects found in different types of vegetation and the consequential assortments of birds attracted by these species of insects. The report for example says that Dhub or Bermuda grass is suitable for certain airfields as this does not grow too tall and does not encourage birds to take shelter in it. The seeds of this grass (*Cynodon dactylon*) are unattractive to birds. The report lists 139 species of birds observed at Hindan Airport (near Delhi) and among the 83 species listed in Bombay Airport, one finds the pelican, little cormorant, honey buzzard, and whitebellied sea eagle. But the asterisk against these names indicates that the birds were only seen overflying the airport area.

This report was sponsored by the Aeronautics R and D Board, Ministry of Defence, as a large number of air force planes are lost every year through bird strikes. With the support of the Ministry of Defence the BNHS has also produced a brochure on Potential Problem Birds at Indian Aerodromes. This 59 page booklet has colour illustrations of several species of soaring birds, non-soaring aerial birds, and non bird, which section consists of just one form of life, the giant fruit bat or flying fox. Apparently these flying mammals also get sucked into the engines of aircraft. These reports make fascinating reading and perhaps the BNHS would be glad to supply them to our readers on request.

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Guest Editor: I am sure our subscribers welcomed the effort of Kumar Ghorpade who edited and typed the stencils of the January-February issue. He seems to relish editorial work and has offered to produce the stencils for the Newsletter whenever he has the time. I will of course invite him to be our Guest Editor occasionally. Offers from others to act as Guest Editors will be welcomed, though I recognise that this should not be overdone, otherwise the Newsletter may become a hybrid with no character of its own. Kumar Ghorpade has offered to produce an index for the Newsletter right from the start. This would be extremely useful and I hope the effort will not be

abandoned for lack of time. Ghorpade requests that the following missing numbers be supplied to him and of you who have these numbers may kindly write to him:

Volume 1 Numbers 2 and 4 to 12
 Volume 2 Numbers 1 to 12
 Volume 3 Numbers 1 to 12
 Volume 4 Numbers 1 to 12
 Volume 13 Numbers 1 to 7 and 10 to 11
 Volume 18 Number 3
 Volume 22 Numbers 1, 3 to 6 and 9 to 10
 Volume 23 Numbers 3 to 12
 Volume 24 Number 1+2

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Bombay Natural History Society Staff Seminar: The BNHS organised a staff seminar at the Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore, between 11-13 March to assess the quality of the work done by field assistants assigned to the various projects. The BNHS now has an impressive contingent of ornithologists in the field, and the projects on which presentations were made included:

The ecology of the Great Indian Bustard: (*Choriotis Nigriceps*) by Ranjit Manakadan. It appears that as a result of protection the GIB 'made a resurgence' here in the Drought Prone Areas Programme in NANAJ village 20 kms north of Sholapur town in Maharashtra. As a result of this study the habitat requirements of the species is better understood.

The Lesser Florican: (*Sypheotides indica*), and the Bengal Florican (*S. bengalensis*) by Galden Bhutra. Data on these two species with respect to habitat and ecology is insufficient for an action plan. Therefore, a field station was set up in Sailana in Khamar Sanctuary in Madhya Pradesh for a study of the Lesser Floricans. Two males were banded and a great deal of interesting behaviour was recorded.

Birds in monoculture plantations: By Mrs. Tara Gandhi. Bird populations in Casurina, Eucalyptus and Cashew plantations are being studied. While it was expected that 'bird numbers, density, and nesting activities are greater in the natural scrub vegetation control plots than in any of the plantations', it is revealing that in the cashew plantations during the fruiting and flowering season, bird counts are equally high. This finding is surprising and perhaps it is due to the fact that the Cashew plantations are not pure

monocultures as is the case with Eucalyptus and Casurina, but there is considerable scrub interspersed between the Cashew trees. Mrs. Gandhi is being requested to clarify this point.

The Point Calimere Avifauna Project: The one of the major projects undertaken by the BNHS, and nine participants made presentations on various aspects. A report on this will be included in a subsequent issue of the Newsletter.

The Hydrobiological Station at Bharatpur: This important project of the BNHS, has run into difficulties. When the Bharatpur Keola Deo Sanctuary was converted into a National Park the BNHS, along with other conservation bodies, naturally recommended that domestic cattle should be removed from the area. This was done and some graziers unfortunately were killed in a police action meant to keep the National Park free from deleterious influences. It now seems that some element of grazing by domestic animals is necessary to keep the grass down, and prevent its growing so tall that no bird life is visible. A national park is ultimately meant to conserve the scenery, and the historic and natural objects, the wildlife and flora, for the enjoyment of human beings. If the birds - the prime attraction of Bharatpur became 'Purdah Nasheens' because of the vegetation, it will detract greatly from the influence which this unique area has had in motivating people to take an interest in nature. It is hoped that Government authorities and ecologists can find a solution in the long term interest of this National Park.

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The Ecology of Monogamy: The New Scientist of 30-8-84 carried an article by Robin Dunbar which is worth looking at. Those of you who are interested can ask for a xeroxed copy. Please send a self addressed envelope and five rupees in stamps. Explaining why birds are mostly monogamous the Author says: Among birds, the male is effectively coerced into monogamy right at the outset by the fact that the eggs, once laid, have to be incubated more or less continuously until they hatch, a process that can take two or three weeks. Exceptional cases like the emperor penguin apart, most species find this too debilitating a task for one parent to carry alone. The male's problems do not end at hatching either, for the nestlings are voracious little beasts that need to be fed until they are old enough to fly. Nestlings consume such prodigious quantities that it is all but impossible for a single parent to provide enough food for more than one or two of them. Since most

birds are capable of laying up to half a dozen eggs (and some manage many more); limiting the numbers of fledglings to so few would be a gross waste of reproductive potential. Individuals who behave in such a way as to improve the survival rate of their fledglings would have a major evolutionary advantage. We might therefore expect male birds to take a greater interest in the reproductive success of their mates because, by helping to rear a large brood, they are likely to gain more offspring (and hence genes contributed to the gene pool) than they would be mating with many more females.

Nonetheless, even male birds sometimes try to cheat. In a recent study, Hans Temrin of Stockholm University found that, although normally monogamous, male willow warblers often set up a second territory after they have paired. However, even if a male is successful in pairing with a second female, he will help only one of them feed their young after hatching. 'The other female is deserted and left to try and rear her brood as best she can alone, often with limited success.' The author goes on to suggest that 'where territories differ considerably in quality, it may pay a female to become polygamously mated on a very good quality territory rather than to be monogamous on a poor quality territory, even if this means having to rear her brood unaided'.

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Pending articles: I find there are now a large number of articles pending publication, and time, energy, and finance permitting, I will produce monthly issues again so that the pending file does not become any larger.

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Salim Ali was in Bangalore in mid-March, and I asked him whether age was slowing down his national and international peregrinations. He replied that he had just been to Cochin, that he was on his way to Chikmaglur and was shortly going to Mussorie and neighbouring areas in search of the long lost Mountain Quail (*Ophrysia superciliosa*) last seen in 1876. Apparently the Army is making all the bundobast for the expedition, and they will arrange for hunting dogs to flush out the birds (if they exist) from the undergrowth. This is no easy task for as the Handbook (Vol.2 page 73) says: The Mountain Quail 'was found in coveys of 5 or 6 in patches of long grass and brushwood on steep hillsides. Flew reluctantly when almost trampled on, heavily and for short distances, soon pitching into the grass again'. Let us hope that the bird will be re-discovered.

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Dodda Gubbi Birds: On the 20th of March, I was delighted to find a female magpie robin present in our compound. The bird flew up the Apta tree on which I have fixed a nesting box given by Joseph George. It would be wonderful if this bird, a female, decides to nest in our garden and manages to acquire a mate. The absence of this species so far has been greatly missed, as for years we enjoyed the songs of magpie robins in Bombay.

On the 19th, I saw the first Grey wagtail of the season in our compound. What has happened to wagtails? Was there a very depleted migration this year. The Ioras and Golden orioles are both in splendid breeding plumage and I will look out for their nests. Both the purple sun bird as well as the purple rumped sun bird have established themselves in our garden and have been nesting. There are two leaf warblers which I cannot identify and will not attempt to do so because this is an impossible business. I suppose that unless you have the bird in hand, identification cannot be certain.

On the Dodda Gubbi Lake, there was a green shank and a grey heron. The green shanks have been visiting the lake ever since we came here ten years ago. But because of the disturbance caused by a brick making kiln set up on the fore shore, and the damage caused to the fore-shore by brick making operations, many of the other lacustrine species have not turned up. All my attempts with the Development Commissioner, the Secretary, Ecology and Environment, the Additional Revenue Commissioner, the Chief Conservator of Forests, and the Chairman of the Village Panchayat to preserve this one marvellous wetland has been a failure. I recall an evenings walk ten years ago, when several of us who were present thought that the beauty of this environment was equal to that of Kashmir. Now it has become a painful eye sore and there is very little hope of being able to rehabilitate its scarred features.

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Some random notes on birds of U.P. by Kunwar Suresh Singh, I.V.R.I., Izatnagar: I cannot claim to be a devoted bird watcher leave alone a birder but all my life I have been interested in watching birds. In my earlier days I had shot some game birds, and later, all kinds, specially in and around Mukteswar (Dist.Naini Tal, alt.c 2300 m) for my helminthological studies. Over the years I have made casual observations and since I did not keep any notes,

naturally only unusual events stuck in my memory. I was hesitant to record these notes but then I thought that even a big building is made up of small bricks.

Paradise flycatcher (Terpsiphone paradisi): During the last 45 years or so, I have seen a male in breeding plumage only on 5 occasions. The first was in a guava orchard near Bara Banki in or about 1940. The second was in a mango orchard in Sitapur district in or about 1955. The third time was in the reserved forest (in 1958) near Powalgarh (Dist. Naini Tal) very near the place where the legendary Jim Corbett shot the equally famous tiger called the Bachelor of Powalgarh. The fourth time was on a guava tree growing adjacent to my residence in Izatnagar (Bareilly district) in 1982. The fifth time was in the garden of my house at Lucknow in the last week of March 1984. Thus, it appears that the bird is fairly widely distributed in U.P. but not common. On all occasions the bird was seen in early summer and in breeding plumage. Could it be that the bird is present during other periods also but being in non-breeding plumage is less visible?

Indian Koel: There are 2 yellow oleander ('Kandel', Thevetia nereifolia) bushes growing in my garden at Izatnagar. As is well known, the plant produces a fleshy fruit of medium size but with a comparatively large and very hard nut. (Incidentally, the seed is poisonous and is used in concocting an insecticide in fact all parts of the bush are poisonous). When the fruit is green it, like the stems and leaves, produces a milky white sap when scratched. When the fruit ripens it becomes slightly yellowish and is then fed on by roseringed parakeet (Psittacula krameri), Blossomheaded parakeet (P. cyanocephala), redvented bulbul (Pycnonotus cafer), redwhiskered bulbul (P. jocosus), tree pie (Dendrocitta vagabunda), large green barbet (Megalaima zeylanica), coppersmith (M. haemacephala) and koel (Eudynamis scolopacea). The winter of 1982-83 was a particularly cold and long one at Izatnagar and I observed the tree pie and koel feeding regularly on the fruits. There are not many birds that will scare away a tree pie but I saw that the moment a male koel alighted on this bush, the tree pie which had been feeding, would immediately leave the bush from the opposite side. Again, in the winter of 1983-84 a pair of koel visited this bush regularly for feeding. Many times the two birds shared one fruit which had fallen to the ground very amicably. I can not say whether the pair of koel that I have been seeing in my garden almost during all the months of the year for the last few years, is resident or they belong to a floating population.

Purple sunbird: It is well known that mortality among chicks in nest due to predation can be very high. The purple sunbird (*Nectarinia asiatica*) is one of those birds that is stupid enough to build its nest at a very low level, well in reach of all predators. During the last two seasons I have observed the birds to make a nest eight times, seven in the garden of our laboratory and one in my house garden. In all cases I found the eggs and chicks robbed and not one chick was raised successfully. The birds must have succeeded elsewhere but I wonder how a species can withstand such heavy predation.

Little brown dove: In the summer of 1982, a pair of little brown dove (*Streptopelia senegalensis*) built a nest over the fuse box in the veranda of our laboratory, a little less than 2 m from the floor. Between May and September it laid 5 clutches, each of 2 eggs, and 7 chicks were successfully raised. Any number of persons used the veranda during the working hours, sometimes passing within a metre of the brooding dove and never did she leave the nest. Both once in the morning and once in the afternoon it would leave the nest at about the same time every day, presumably for feeding and watering. I never saw the other bird? (male) replacing the brooding dove. Apparently the ambient temperature was high enough not to chill the eggs. In one brood, the chicks had partly feathered and were fairly big when they disappeared overnight. The nest was not disturbed nor was there any sign of blood. The chicks would deposit their faeces on the rim (and not beyond) of the fairly well constructed nest (not as skimpy as one expects in other doves including pigeons). Once the two chicks had left, the dove would start adding some more dried grass stems and slender pieces of stick on top of the old one and lay another clutch. This was repeated four times. The nest was left undisturbed but the doves did not make another 'sandwich' the next year. The nest is still there today (April 1984).

Grey partridge: I have a captive pair of grey partridge, and judging by the colour, it is North Indian race (*Francolinus pondicerianus interpositus*). This pair is living in a breeding pen, 8.5 m long, 2.5 m wide and 2m high, which once housed the cheer pheasants. It is well planted with shrubs and weeds and grasses grow naturally. In 1983, between 25 March and 9 April the female laid 11 eggs and up to this stage the female had not begun to sit on eggs and so I thought may be she had lost the instinct to incubate and so I removed 8 eggs between 9 and 11 April.

The female went on laying eggs and by 17 April she had laid 16 eggs. On this day fairly heavy rain started and so the rest of the eggs were removed, and all 16 eggs were given to a bantam broody for incubation. Amazingly, the bantam did not break even a single egg. The partridges subsequently made 4 cup-like and fairly deep depressions, very close to each other in the middle of the pen and in one of these fresh eggs were laid and the female started to incubate the eggs on 25 April. For fear of disturbing the broody partridge I did not examine the nest very closely, the partridges being well known for their close sitting. On 29 April when she left the nest on her own to feed I saw 9 eggs. During the day the male was never seen to incubate the eggs which it may be doing at night when the aviary was not under observation. In 1984, the first egg was laid by the same female on 20 March and by 30 March 9 eggs had been laid and she started to incubate on 1 April and on 2 April the tenth egg was laid. According to literature the normal clutch has 4 to 8 or 9 eggs but at least once when as many as 11 eggs had been laid she had not started to incubate. In 1983 she had laid 25 eggs within less than a month! Of the 16 eggs given to the broody, 5 were clear and the rest were hatched in an incubator.

Some new feeding habits: Most of the birds are said to live by instinct and their actions are not governed by intelligent thinking and reasoning. However, at least two birds - the Galapagos Finch and the Egyptian Vulture are known to use a tool for finding food. Any person who has kept a wild bird in captivity knows how difficult it is to make the bird accept a food which it normally does not take in the wild state. The birds are afraid of getting poisoned and hence do not like to experiment except for birds like crows, mynahs, house-sparrow and such like which have learnt to live with man. In U.P. a lot of sugarcane is transported by road and occasionally a cane falls on the road which is soon run over by a vehicle and thus crushed. I have seen on numerous occasions the roseringed parakeet (*Psittacula krameri*) feeding on the crushed cane on the road. If there is a small piece of cane, it is lifted and carried to a tree. I wonder how this parakeet learnt that the crushed cane will provide a sweet juice for I have not seen other birds including the blossomheaded parakeet (*P. cyanocephala*) feeding on the cane though it is found in the same area.

The crows are known to be very intelligent birds and I saw a proof of this a few years ago. We had finished a tea party on the lawn and a few biscuits were left on the

table. I saw a house-crow (Corvus splendens) pick up a small round biscuit, fly over to a small puddle of water, dunk it in and then swallow it. Apparently the biscuit was too dry to be swallowed and breaking it up into smaller pieces may have meant losing some pieces to others. (See Muthana in J.B.N. H.S., 80:220). Thus, the crow found an ideal solution to a new problem.

In the early summer of 1982, Dr.B.S.Lamba, the well known ornithologist and myself were staying in the guest house at Mukteswar (Dist.Naini Tal). This area is very rich in the hill birds. Near the guest house there were a couple of mercury vapour lamps which attracted a very large number of pale yellow or buff coloured moths (un-identified). I observed the Himalayan whistling thrush (Myiophonus caeruleus temmincki) avidly feeding on the moths up to at least 9.30 p.m. In the mornings would first come a group of bank mynah (Acridothera ginningianus) and Indian mynah (A.tristis) which would start from the north side and systematically go through the hedge plants and the potted plants kept in the veranda, dislodging and capturing the moths. A little while later, would come a group of jungle crow (Corvus macrorhynchos) when the mynahs would leave, and the crows too would start from the north side. This procedure was seen by me on the 4 mornings that I stayed there.

I keep an earthenware pot filled with water at the base of a peach tree growing near the door of my bed-sitting room. Around the dish I sometimes cast some millets, crushed maize and other grains and I get many hours of pleasure as many birds in my area come to it regularly specially during the summer. One day I saw a house-crow perching on the rim of the pot, take a drink, and then fish out a peach leaf from the depth of the pot, and cast it away before drinking again. I feel sure that the crow knew that it was a leaf and hence of no interest as food to it and yet it had fished it out.

Attack by spotted owlet: The compound of my residence at Izatnagar has many large trees like mango (Mangifera indica), jamun (Eugenia jambolana), Siris (Albizia lebbek), Kanakchampa (Pterospermum acerifolium) etc. and there are some spotted owlets that live among these trees. One late evening I was passing inbetween two trees when I felt something brush against my hair at the back and immediately I saw an owlet flying away into the trees. When I switched on the torch to the place where the owlet had gone, I saw five individuals sitting close together. Similar attacks were

repeated the next two nights and though the bird hit the head lightly, I started carrying a small stick and waving it around the head when I reached the 'war zone' to prevent an attack. This action was prompted by the knowledge of an owl's attack on the doyen of bird photographers, Eric Hosking who lost an eye in the process. I presume there was a pair with 3 grown-up chicks and it was in the defence of the chicks that the owl attacked, telling me in no uncertain terms that I was an intruder and should keep away. Perhaps a similar thing happened as reported by Acharya Dwarkanath (N.J.B.W., 23(11/12), 1983:13).

Nesting birds: In an earlier note, I had mentioned the golden oriole (*Oriolus oriolus*), black drongo (*Dicrurus adsimilis*) and house crow (*Corvus splendens*) nesting within a short distance of each other. Monga and Rodrigues (J.B.N.H.S., 80:218) have reported a similar situation.

The game the crows play: The main road of Mukteswar (Dist. Naini Tal) runs along a razorback and is flanked on either side by tall deodar (*Cedrus deodara*) trees which end in a single point. On the north and south sides are deep valleys, the one on the south side being specially deep. In the summer months the floor of the valley gets heated considerably and thus a strong updraught blows every afternoon along the south face. I have observed a party of about 8-10 crows would arrive and one would sit on the apex and the other would hover above and a little behind the sitting crow. Suddenly one crow would close its wings and approach the sitting crow, whereupon the sitting crow would raise its wings and be lifted up when the other crow would occupy the apex. After a few minutes another crow would approach and the whole process would be repeated. Apparently the various crows were doing this by turns and the performance was kept up for 30 min. or so. I have no hesitation in saying that the crows were enjoying the game and were not just wanting to sit for there were any number of equally tall trees adjacent to the one on which the game was being played.

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Birds dominant in the Thar Desert by Indra Kumar Sharma: The little brown dove (*Streptopelia senegalensis*) and the Indian ring dove (*Streptopelia decaocto*) are the commonest birds in and around the Thar Desert. Possible reasons for their abundance there are: 1) They have no paucity of food and thrive on all types of grass seeds as well as those of some herbs and shrubs; 2) They are very tolerant of the arid

environment with extreme temperatures and poor water availability. The longtailed streaked babbler⁺ (Turdoides caudatus) is the next most abundant bird. It is omnivorous, fairly tolerant to high and low temperatures and able to acquire necessary water from insect food. It is also a social bird and thus has a better searching ability for food as well as protection against its enemies.

In the gravelly, arid biotope, the Indian Robin (Saxicoloides fulicata) is third in abundance, thrives on small insects and is well adapted to an arid biotope. The Indian Sandgrouse (Pterocles exustus) is also present in fair populations (where not hunted), thriving on seeds of grasses and herbs, being very hardy to the adverse arid environment. It covers large areas in search of food and water.

Around villages and human habitation in the desert, the house sparrow (Passer domesticus), house crow (Corvus splendens), blue rock pigeon (Columba livia) and the Indian peafowl (Pavo cristatus) exist in large populations. The house sparrow thrives on food grains around farms and houses, as well as on kitchen waste, and is well adapted to live in such environments. It has 3 or 4 broods each year and nests during February to June and again from September to October each year. The house crow also thrives on kitchen scrap, etc., around human dwellings and breeds profusely here. The blue rock pigeon enjoys protection and feeding by villagers and is well adapted to live and breed here. It has about 4 broods each year and the domestic cat is the only potential predator. The peafowl also enjoys protection and feeding by the locals and thrives in high populations here.

⁺ This is often called the 'common babbler'. As I have pointed out (1974, J. Bombay nat. Hist. Soc., 70:523), we need to give up using 'common' (many bird species are not common throughout their range!) as an adjective to a bird name and use a more descriptive word(s) to preclude ambiguity. I had suggested (Newsl. Birdwatchers, 1974 14(9): 6-7) we also need to have a standard list of English names for our birds, available in S.D. Ripley's SYNOPSIS (1961).....K.D.G.

It has one clutch of eggs in July/August, only around three eggs hatching (out of 4-8 laid), the others robbed and eaten by the domestic cat and the pariah dog.

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Correspondence

Captive breeding of pheasants by Kunwar Suresh Singh, Auto House, 3 Srinagar Singh Building, Lalbagh, Lucknow-226001:
It gives me great pleasure to inform you that the Government has accepted in principle my proposal for a project on captive breeding of pheasants. Initially we will take up cheer but later on, we will add a few more species, specially those whose numbers in the wild have very much decreased. I shall also endeavour to have a representative collection of as many species of Indian pheasants as I can collect. I have some very ambitious plans about the shape and nature of the pheasantry. I sincerely hope that I have your good wishes and blessings for the success of the project. My main problem would be not only to get the birds but also a couple of good and sincere workers.

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Suggestions for the Newsletter by K.K. Surendran, Market Rd., Mulanthuruthy P.O., Kerala 682314:

1. The Newsletter should be published as a monthly, and it should reach its members by the first week of every month.
2. The subscription rates should be Rs.25/- per annum - so that publication expenses could be met.
3. Interesting news about bird migration, ringing and recovery records can be collected from BNHS and further published in the Newsletter for interest reading.

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Disappearance of some birds from Bhuj by Maharaj Kumar Himmatsinhji, Jubilee Ground, Bhuj, Kutch: Modern man has acquired tremendous knowledge in the field of science which he has put to use over the years for, what he thinks, his benefit. By this prowess acquired he has become quite arrogant and ignores nature and her laws; and it is due to this arrogant disregard of the processes of nature and natural selection that has done untold harm to the life on this planet. Amongst the various scientific discoveries is the production on a mass scale of pesticides, fungicides

and so on. The residual effects of some of these on the system of animals, and humans also, is gradual and imperceptible. The effects of this slow poison are felt more by insectivorous birds and the birds of prey. The very alert naturalists in the western world, particularly in Great Britain, realised this fact as soon as they perceived the depletion in the numbers of certain birds, especially birds of prey; and they immediately started persuading the governments of the countries concerned to mend matters. Remedial measures were put in motion by way of keeping a strict check on the manufacture of such pesticides etc., and the elimination of or reducing the amounts of such known harmful substances to safer levels in the insecticides. Whereas we, in this country, have yet to wake up as far as it concerns the manufacture and liberal use of these pesticides is concerned.

Having given this background to the readers of the Newsletter for Birdwatchers, I come to the subject matter of this note which is to give instances of the disappearances of some birds in recent times from the locality in which I live. I have been living in the small town of Bhuj in Kutch district for the last 50 years and more. I built a house for myself on the outskirts of the town 30 years ago. The house is surrounded by over 15 acres of land. There were large neem trees all round and other indigenous trees and shrubbery. After I moved into the house, I planted some fruit trees including mangoes. There was wasteland and scrub jungle on three sides of my grounds which extended upto at least between 3 to 5 miles, and, of course, the Bhujia Hill to the east which Dr. Salim Ali describes in the Birds of Kutch as 'A vertiable index of bird migration in progress'.

Among the birds that visited my garden and grounds used to be the whitewinged black tit and the blackwinged kite which sometimes used to nest in the neem trees on the periphery of the grounds and outside in the wasteland. Then during my bird watching strolls I sometimes used to see the whitebellied minivet in the scrub. All these birds along with the white scavenger vulture just seem to have vanished into thin air from the locality in which I live. Apart from the effects of pesticides, another contributory factor to this state of affairs is the destruction of habitat caused by the rapid development all round the human colonies and destruction of trees and scrub in the wasteland. This sad state of affairs is common to many other parts of our country.

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Black storks by Rajeshwari Ramani, C/o Major K.G. Ramani, 6 Mahar(Borders), C/o 56 APO: On 27th February 1985, on our way to Kankivadi Fort, 25 kms from Sariska Wildlife Sanctuary, I was thrilled to spot about 12 black storks. It was on a marshy land next to a pond.

I was quite surprised to sight them here because prior to my visit to Sariska, I was at Bharatpur Bird Sanctuary and could not spot a single black stork there.

The stork in question had the following description - black head, neck and upper parts. White patch below lower breast to undertail coverts. Bill and legs red. These storks were in marshy grounds and feeding on fish. They were shy and wary unlike the white storks.

To confirm that it was black stork and not black necked stork, my husband and myself flushed these storks into flight and saw white below their wings, bill and legs were red in colour and not black.

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Progress on the 'questionnaire for birdwatchers' by Kumar D. Ghorpade, Dodda Gubbi Post, Bagalur 562149: At the time of writing this note (March 26, 1985) for the Newsletter, I have received 40 replies already, which is very encouraging and satisfying! Mr. Zafar Futehally has passed on those questionnaires that were addressed to him and is also pleased at your response.

I have responded to a few initial answers from colleagues and would like to assure all of you that I am thrilled at your enthusiasm and would like to maintain a personal contact with each of you (albeit through correspondence, until we meet) in future. Those who have sent in questionnaires but not heard from me, please await my response a while. Those who are yet thinking about responding, stop thinking - get your pen to work on the simple questionnaire and mail it to me pronto! It is time we got all the coaches (passenger cars) of our 'Indian Bird-watchers Train' locked together and on the rails speeding away to our ultimate destination! Do write and join the gang. My thanks to those of you who have sent in the questionnaire, and my plea to those who have not yet sent, to send it in as soon as possible.

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Sparrowhawk attacking house sparrow by Sydney Reeves,
6 Town Close, Holt, Norfolk, U.K.: We have just had a
 female sparrowhawk swoop down into our back garden and
 take a house sparrow. It stood on the ground with the
 sparrow in its talons for quite a while, looking
 suspiciously around, and then flew off with its prey.
 We had wonderful views. It was only about five yards from
 the back of the house.

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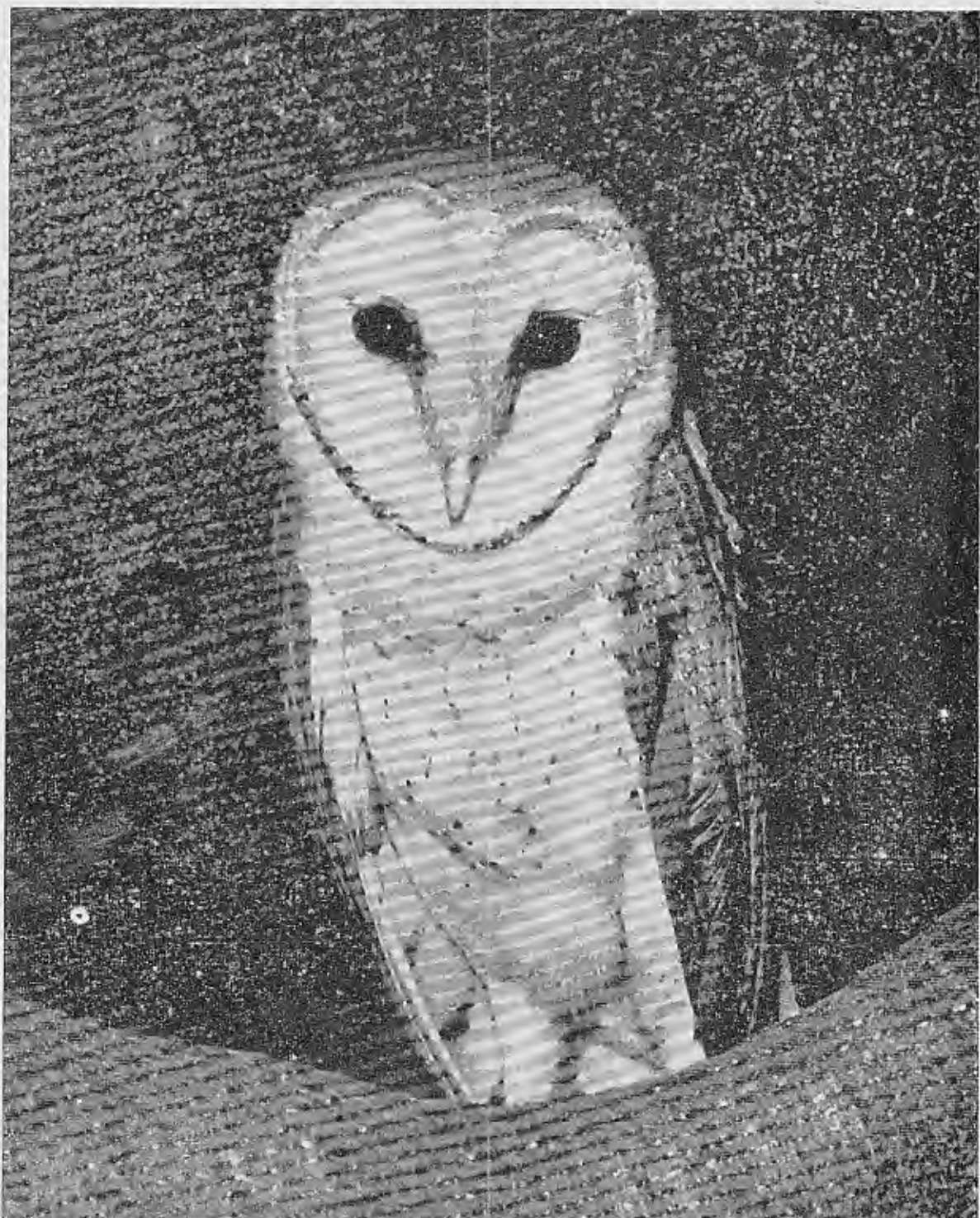
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Newsletter for Birdwatchers

VOL. XXV NO. 7 & 8 JULY - AUGUST 1985



New Initiative in Education in Madhya Pradesh

- Seven Govt. Colleges at the divisional headquarters will be developed during 1985-86 as model colleges in the first phase of the programme to bring about qualitative improvement in higher education.
- The teacher - pupil ratio in these model colleges will be 1:20 and classes will be held for atleast 180 days. The colleges taken up in the first phase are - Govt. Holker College, Indore, Govt. Motilal Science College, Bhopal, Govt. Science College, Jabalpur, Gwalior, Raipur Rewa and Bilaspur. Admission to these colleges will be through entrance examination.
- Teachers and employees of private colleges will receive all benefits available to Govt. employees. These include house rent allowance, leave encashment and gratuity.
- Teachers in polytechnics granted A.I.C.I.E. pay scales comparable to teachers of engineering colleges.
- The training facilities available at the engineering colleges, polytechnics and I.I.Ts. of the State will be utilised to conduct part-time course for people in the job.
- Social forestry clubs to be organised in schools of the state from the ensuing session.

An alert Govt. committed to qualitative development of education

NEWSLETTER
FOR BIRDPWATCHERS

Vol. XXV No.7 and 8

July-August 1985

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Editorial:

The intelligence of birds: Birdwatchers will have to admit with regret that birds have very little capacity to put two and two together. Sea gulls will continue to sit on nests even though the eggs have been removed and substituted by ping pong balls or equivalent stuff. Tailor birds, ashy wrenwarblers and sunbirds make their nests in the most exposed places, and so come to grief. Or perhaps this is nature's method of population control. But the devotion of birds to their young is noteworthy and I quote from a letter from Nazir Latif whose son Husein is becoming a keen birder. - 'Husein was playing cricket last month in the rather large garden of one of our neighbours. In this garden is a pipul tree about twenty metres high. On this tree, at a height of about fifteen metres there was a nest of pariah kites, in which, at the time there were two chicks. On the particular morning in question, the mali had collected a large quantity of leaves and other rubbish under the pipul and wanting to get rid of it the easy way, set it on fire. The flames rose very high, may be upto ten metres, and the kites nest was in trouble as it was directly overhead. Since the chicks were not old enough to make a getaway, the parents immediately came over the nest and settled on the chicks to protect them from the heat. Unfortunately, the fire went on for some time and in the event, the nest together with all four birds were completely charred and burnt. They finally fell to the ground and it was found that both the chicks and both the parents were almost fully burnt and, of course, were dead. I had not heard of such devotion to their progeny by any bird before! Or does it often happen?'

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Masked boobies on the West Coast: These birds (*Sula dactylatra*) are mainly oceanic and seldom come to land. However, in the last few months several have been blown ashore on the west coast near Udupi, and Acharya Dwarakanath has been sending in reports for the Newsletter. In one of his letters he writes - 'Yesterday (7.7.85) we had the good fortune of seeing the ringing of *Sula dactylatra* by Sri.S.A.Hussain of the B.N.H.S. at the Malpe beach. Mr.Hussain examined the bird and gave some useful hints to the caretaker. The bird has become very docile and domesticated, and eats a lot of fish and squids. Mr.Hussain suggested that the bird be held against the wind to make it beat its wings several times so that its muscles are given

adequate exercise and not get atrophied. As long as the bird preens itself we need not worry about its health'.

The Handbook gives the following information about this booby: Common out at sea off Sind and Makran coasts and elsewhere. Occasionally blown in on the western seaboard during the monsoon gales. Obtained thus at Karachi, Bombay, Cannanore and Ceylon. The plunging habit needs clear water in which prey can be spotted at some depth, therefore the birds usually avoid the muddy littoral. During the plunge, the conspicuous dark tail is fanned out as a rudder.

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Bird strikes: In the March-April issue of the Newsletter I referred to the ecological study of bird hazards in Indian aerodromes. I see from the press that the authorities have taken steps to remove the slaughter house from near the Mangalore Airport and every one has been advised to keep the periphery of the airport free of rubbish dumps, so that there is no attraction for scavenging birds. Bird strikes are a serious matter, but Thomas Gay has written about it in a light hearted vein and I reproduced his piece by courtesy of Newstime, Hyderabad.

=====

On the Subspecies Concept by Ranjit R.J. Daniels, Centre for Ecological Sciences, Sirsi, N.Kanara 581402: Based on the similarities and differences, the various life forms were classified into kingdoms, phylas, classes, orders, families, genera and species. This system of classification has been accepted and practised traditionally since Linnaeus first designed it. In recent times, further subdivisions viz., races and varieties, within a species, were added. However, this was questioned by biologists as races and varieties were described from individual samples. Often it was realised that these 'races' and 'varieties' were just diseased or immature individuals and had to be rejected.

Modern biology with all its advanced techniques has enabled the closer study of populations and analyse the reasons for individual variation. The biological species concept has had its influence on taxonomy and today groups of organisms are not classified merely based on their similarities or differences but by their genetic affinities. Morphometric and electrophoretic analyses have helped biologists identify and describe definite races and varieties.

A race has been defined as 'a population or population system within a species that differs statistically in the composition of its gene pool and in its genetically determined phenotypic characters from other populations or population systems within the species'. The term race has been used at two levels. It can be just a local race or a major geographic race. The latter is referred to as subspecies. Thus a subspecies simply would mean 'a named geographic race'. The term variety is used in botany.

There are more subspecies described in birds than in any other class of animals. The primary reason for this can be the fact that the birds as a class are the most thoroughly studied. Also, their wide geographic distribution which has resulted in scattering and isolation has brought about the observed differences between the different populations of a species.

Identifying the different subspecies within a species in the field is not possible at all times. Very often, in a continuous land mass when more than one subspecies of a species occur, it is difficult to draw a line separating one from the other. Their home ranges overlap. They interbreed and produce intermediate forms which cannot be described as either of the parental subspecies. In such situations, both the keen taxonomist and the field ornithologist find it extremely difficult to decide on the systematic position of that bird. The latter is often forced to ignore these 'trivial' differences and be content if he can recognise the species. But is that the answer? Can the subspecies concept be overlooked altogether?

The subspecies concept need not be overlooked. Of course it may pose practical problems to a field ornithologist. As stated earlier, in many cases, it is impossible to identify a bird to the subspecies level in the field. Moreover, with today's legal restriction on collecting birds, it appears as if it is beyond one's scope of study. Valuable information may be lost on the distribution patterns and habitat preferences if the exact identity of a bird is not determined. There are birds in which one subspecies is resident while another is a winter visitor to the same geographic region. Without properly understanding this, population estimates may not be accurate.

Subspecies are believed to be the early stages of speciation. Conservationists are interested in preserving the genetic diversity. Subspecies diversity forms a part of it. Each subspecies is a unique gene pool with individuals well adapted to the small or isolated geographic

region it occupies. Probably the bird with the highest number of subspecies described hitherto is the golden whistler (Pachycephala pectoralis: Muscicapidae) distributed over the Pacific Islands. There are 67 subspecies. There are other examples too. Our familiar Barn Owl (Tyto alba) has got a worldwide distribution and exists as 36 subspecies. The greater number of subspecies within a species would simply mean that the species is more adaptive and thus more widespread geographically. Each subspecies is unique genetically and cannot be neglected.

As mentioned before, whenever there is a large number of subspecies, there are intermediate forms too. These intermediate forms are hybrids resulting from interbreeding when two different subspecies meet. Biologists consider this as something natural. Hybrids can be both advantageous and harmful. When a hybrid population is cut off from its parental stock it is called a 'hybrid swarm'. Hybrid swarms may or may not occupy a different geographic region. They may in course of time swamp the parental forms and wipe them out. Unique subspecies can be lost this way. However, sometimes conservationists do consider hybrid swarms as an advantage. They feel (in extreme cases) that one of the parental stocks if endangered can be reconstituted through back crossing with the hybrids.

In India very little is known about the different subspecies in birds, particularly their geographic distribution. We do not know if already any of them is locally extinct or on the verge of extinction. In spite of the practical problems, it would be worth investigating. Within the subcontinent, we have the Himalayan, the malabar and the Sri Lankan subregions. I chose to mention these three alone as they are ecologically comparable. Careful study of the populations of species over these subregions will give valuable information on a specified species with all its subspecies along with some well planned collecting or netting can add a lot more to what is already known about it. Museum specimens are of immense value in such investigations.

In summary, the subspecies concept is valid. It may be ill-defined in many cases. Nevertheless, it is not something that can be over-looked. It is of importance in preserving the genetic diversity. It is of interest to the conservationists. In India little attention is being paid to the subspecies concept. Well-planned studies can reveal wonderful facts about the concept.

Checklist of Birds of Madras Area by V. Santharam. 68, Santhome High Road, Madras 600028: Members of the Madras Naturalists' Society are engaged in compiling a checklist of birds of the Madras area. This includes Madras city and a radius of 100 kms of Madras. In other words, it includes Madras and areas that could be visited in a day's outing. We have so far recorded about 280 species. In addition, there are a few old records from this area of several species, which have not been recorded since. This includes, besides others, Ruddy kingfisher, woodcock, emerald and violet cuckoos and rackettailed drongo.

It is proposed to bring out this 'checklist' as a booklet shortly. It is hoped that this would serve as a starting point for further studies in this region. The wetland of Madras regularly host thousands of migrant waders and waterfowl on passage and are important from the viewpoint of migration studies. Birdwatchers of the Society have undertaken a Survey of the potential areas and are regularly visiting them and keeping records. Any reader who wishes to contribute to the data on Birds of Madras, in the form of any books, papers, articles or original notes may contact the author.

Paucity of Woodpeckers in Madras: It is rather surprising to note that out of the thirty-odd species of woodpeckers known to occur in India, Madras has just one representative - the lesser goldenbacked woodpecker (*Dinopium benghalense*). In the last seven years, as a birdwatcher, I have failed to come across any other species here. Also there have been no authentic records or reports of occurrence of any other woodpeckers. Even the common Indian woodpecker - the yellow fronted pied woodpecker Mahratta (*Picoides mahrattensis*) is conspicuous by its absence. I fail to understand the reason for this paucity since there is no dearth of suitable habitat. Even the migrant wryneck (*Jynx torquilla*) reported as far south as Pt. Calimere, has been eluding us. I wonder if any readers could suggest the reason for this strange absence.

The Indian subcontinent boasts of over thirty species of woodpeckers ranging from the tiny pygmy woodpecker, about the size of a sparrow to the great slaty woodpecker, slightly larger than the house crow. While many of them have restricted range and distribution, I understand atleast three resident species could possibly occur here. They are the crown-capped pygmy woodpecker (*Picoides nanus*) black-backed (*Chrysocolaptes festivus*) and the Mahratta or yellow-fronted pied (*Picoides mahrattensis*). Of course, the absence of the last-mentioned

species is quite puzzling. The Mahratta woodpecker has been described in the 'Handbook' as, 'one of the commonest and most widely distributed of our woodpeckers'. It is known to occur in 'all types of lightly wooded country from semi-desert to moist deciduous-proscopis; babool and euphorbia jungle, gardens, mango groves, roadside avenues, etc.,'. Another species that is likely to be seen in Madras during winter is the migrant wryneck (*Junx torquilla*). It has been recorded recently at Pt. Calimere (Tanjore District) and so I don't see why it should not occur in Madras.

Since there is no dearth of habitat, frequented by these birds, namely thorn jungle, open deciduous scrub, groves, gardens, roadside avenues, secondary jungle etc., in Madras and its environs, the absence of the woodpeckers is particularly striking only a serious study concerning the problem could explain this phenomenon.

Pelican at Vedanthangal: The fast dwindling species - the grey or spotbilled pelican (*Pelicanus philippensis*) has shown signs of nesting at Vedanthangal Bird Sanctuary, this year. When I visited this sanctuary on 4th March, 1984, I was greatly thrilled in seeing a good number of these birds, perched on Barringtonia trees, farthest away from the bund. At a very conservative estimate, I put their population at 40. I also noticed a bird carrying twigs of an Accacia tree and some of the Pelicans gave me the impression of incubating. On my next visit on 16th March, I was able to notice a few juvenile pelicans of previous years, as was suggested by their brownish plumage. I was also able to see a group of 28 pelicans flying in to join the 40 odd birds already present. They had come in from the direction of the neighbouring Madurantakan tank which serves as a major feeding ground for the nesting waterbirds.

On my third trip (on May 20th) I was only able to see 8 pelicans including two juveniles. By this time the breeding season was over and the water level in the tank had fallen considerably. My enquiries with the Forest Department workers regarding the pelicans revealed that there was a certain amount of success in their breeding attempts. I was informed that some of the employees were engaged to capture young birds for the newly created Vandalur Zoo, on the outskirts of Madras and some young pelicans had also been taken out the nests. I was further told that these young birds had not even sprouted feathers! At a later date I was able to confirm this from employees of the Vandalur Zoo.

Pelicans have been known to breed at Vedanthangal,

although in the recent past they have been quite rare and not more than 4-5 casual visitors have been seen at a time. It is very encouraging that a good population of these birds turned up at Vedanthangal this year and had met with some success in their attempts to nest. But then it is very vital that these birds continue to do so in future. An important fact that one must bear in mind is that pelicans are very sensitive and have been known to desert their nests even at slightest disturbance. In this regard, the Forest Department's interference with the nesting birds is highly dangerous to the future prospects of the pelicans' nesting. It is essential to do away with every kind of activity that could disturb the pelicans and ensure that this bird continues to thrive in this well-known sanctuary.

Adyar Estuary: The fight for the preservation of the Adyar Estuary continues and it is heartening to note that several other organisations have also taken up the matter and several representations made. Sometime back, the Madras Naturalists' Society and World Wildlife Fund (Tamilnadu chapter) had jointly submitted a detailed report to the Government of Tamilnadu on the Adyar Estuary and the matter is still under consideration. The recently formed Madras Environmental Society has shown great interest in this matter and has launched a signature campaign to mobilise public opinion. The response from the local press has also been very encouraging. 'THE HINDU' and 'INDIAN EXPRESS' had carried articles and letters on this subject and given wide publicity on the importance of the Estuary from the ornithological view point.

Meanwhile, the active group of Birdwatchers have been adding several new species to the Adyar Bird list and the latest tally is around 190 species. Among the recent additions are Glossy Ibis, blackcrested baza, crested honey buzzard, rednecked stint, redwinged crested cuckoo, small cuckoo, brown hawkowl, thickbilled flowerpecker and yellow legged green pigeon. There has also been yet another sighting of the lesser frigate bird (*fregata minor*) from this area on 1st July.

Ruddy Sheldrake or Brahminy Duck: On our birdwatching trip to the Chunampet Backwaters, some 45 kms or so to the north of Pondicherry, on 16th January, this year, I was thrilled in seeing a group of these handsome ducks. There were twenty-six of them, hardly 200 yards away from us. Most of them were resting on the islets and others were in the water, feeding their head and neck under the water. I was also able to hear their nasal honking-notes. Although said to be

wary and most vigilant of our ducks, I was able to get a good view of them from a reasonable distance to my hearts content. My earlier sightings of this species had been at Pt. Calimere on 16.1.80 when just a single bird was seen in the marshes and a couple in flight at Pulicat lake on 15.2.81 from a bus en route to Sri-Harikota island.

Armchair Birdwatching by Lavkumar Khacher, 14, Jayant Society Rajkot 360004: A reason why there are not many birdwatchers is the rather false perception of a birder being a person who get up very, very early, puts on field attire and taking a pair of binoculars goes tramping out into the countryside- preferably a forest to pursue his hobby. All three of these preconceptions can put a good many potential birders off before they have even attempted to start the very satisfying and joyful pastime.

So, for the sake of all potential birdwatchers let me demolish each of the three boggy concepts.

(a) On getting up early: While it is wonderful to develop a habit of rising early, this is not only advantageous for birdwatchers, but for all walks of life, and birds are very active firstly singing before there is enough light to see the late worm, and then avidly hunting to satiate their hunger. Birds are diurnal creature by and large and are around throughout the day. True, they do enjoy a little siesta like most of us in the middle of the day. No, it is not essential to be bustling early in the morning to watch birds. You can do it at all times and infact several species are active at dusk and even in the night.

(b) On getting out into the country: Pursuing birds in the countryside is indeed a pleasant, vigorous and healthy pastime, but birds can also be watched in a suburban garden from your patio or sundeck, and it always does come as a surprise to most people how very many species do occur even in the midst of crowded urban settings. I can think of nothing more relaxing than reclining in a deck chair on a terrace in winter sunshine gazing into the blue vaults of the sky following the spiral soaring of vultures and eagles. You may see quite a good many other species as for example on one very lazy morning last April I saw Indian River Terns flighting from the direction of one of Rajkots' main reservoirs towards another, and I suggested to my young friend Taej Mundkar who is young and still has the

enthusiasm and energy to go and investigate at the reservoirs, to see if the terns were nesting. He found several pairs with eggs on an islet to which he swam out!

(c) On possessing binoculars: Binoculars are a very distinct help and unfortunately they are not readily available in India and, when they are, they are rather on the expensive side. Having binoculars is an ideal, but not having them certainly does not prevent enjoying birds. I have had my pair of glasses stolen, yet I do keep track of all the bird-goings on and as you will see from the further write up, I am enjoying my birds as ever I would, had I a pair of field glasses.

This note is being written from a comfortable chair in the little verandah of my cabin at Manali, Himachal Pradesh. Of course the setting is great, but even I have been very pleasantly surprised at all the birdwatching I have done during this last fortnight of June from the chair. Perhaps a little description of the setting would help explain the bird movements - my cabin is on a small ridge facing south. The small lawn drops into a stream bed across which are terraced fields, some open for wheat and rice, but many with well grown apple, Robineas, and topped by a stately cluster composed of a Horse Chestnut and a couple of Morn Oaks - very tall and elegant. To my right the ridge falls down towards the Beas which I hear roaring angrily below and there are well grown apple trees under which there is considerable mixture of grass, ferns and flowering weeds. On my left the land rises in a couple of terraces to one very delectable terrace on which I have a most elegantly shaped young Horse chestnut. I often put chairs there and scan the great valley observing cloud build ups. Behind me the little ridge slopes into a shallow ravine in which there are a lot of weeds and beyond are a stand of very old and very guarded Moru Oaks which provide nesting sites for several species of birds many of which fly past me on the left and on the right to forage in the fields to the South, and right now, with almost all nests containing loads of hungry nestlings, the goings on are hectic to say the least.

Perhaps the most plentiful are the jungle mynas Acridotheres fuscus which appears to be a smaller edition of the common myna A. tristis and most people mistake the former for the latter. The same superficial colour pattern, the same white flashes in the wings but distinctly more querulous in sound and more active in the air. The smaller size, the darker and greyer colouring, the absence of marked yellow skin round the eyes and a tuft of feathers on the

beak giving it a frowning look distinguish it readily from the larger bird. Pairs of common myna are also around and their more pompous, confiding demeanour is very noticeable.

The jungle myna is certainly more gregarious. When excited at the arrival of a jungle crow Corvus macrohynchos the jungles set up a churring note which has a very insectish sound about it. The old, Nuarled oaks provide nesting sites for this gregarious myna. It was while doing armchair birding and watching all the birds flying to and fro that I noticed two pairs of starling Sturnus vulgaris flying fast and higher to and fro thus extending its recorded breeding range considerably south of the Kashmir valleys.

The Himalayan whistling thrush Myiophonus caeruleus is a very typically Himalayan bird which is seldom out of sight from my chair. The stream flowing past keeps this bird continually in front of me as it hops among the rocks near the water or on to the grass embankments of the terrace fields across. Till this summer a pair regularly nested under a huge rock draped by a waterfall a little up my stream but this year this rock was selected to provide stones for the village school and stone cutters; the water flow was diverted in mid April, fortunately before eggs had been laid and I saw the pair busily evacuate their traditional nest site by carrying away nesting material and flying off with it. On 29th June I was delighted to watch the pair carrying food in their bills and hearing a clatter so indicative of a nestload of lusty young whistling thrushes, I watched where the birds went. I did not have to exert myself much for the new nest site was selected high in a Nuarled old oak next to my chestnut tree - a very unusual site among a cluster of branches. As far as I am aware, all recorded instances of whistling thrush nests are under rocks, on ledges of water draped overhangs, or under gables of houses, etc. The thrushes nest is a substantial affair of moss and other warm, insulating fibres. Like all young of hole and such like protected site nesters, young whistling thrushes are very noisy when parents arrive with food. In this particular location, noisy behaviour would be a disadvantage, but the pugnacity of the parents kept potential predators away. With its nest so close to my cottage I am regaled by the continual rambling song of the adults which starts at 5.00 a.m. and into dusk before the birds go to roost. They are the most uninhibited songsters one can find in the bird world, and do so in flight, while feeding, or proclaiming territorial outposts and near the nest itself. Close on hand the song is a little too loud and discordant, but when heard

at a distance and above the roar of a raging torrent, or coming up from a deep gorge, I can think of no other bird sound more stirring and proclaiming a confidence of life over the elements. The whistler is a very welcome neighbour indeed, and I am very happy to have a pair living so close to me.

I notice the new Pictorial Guide calls this the blue whistling thrush. Quite a misleading name really because in most lights the bird looks black and the blue - or rather purple - is only seen at very favourable angles. If 'Himalayan' is not thought best, the better adjective would be 'large'. The guide also states that it inhabits 'rivers and torrents in heavy forest, wooded ravines and forests', suggesting that forest is the prime requisite. While all its preferred habitats must have been thickly wooded several decades ago, today, this certainly is not the case, the prime requisite is flowing water - even if it is oozing out of a mountain slope and forming a rill through grass or terraced fields. This whistling thrush has happily taken to cultivation and seems to be thriving even where forests are totally gone, along the mounting streams.

Birding in Tiger Territory by Ketan S. Tatu, 4/21, Azad Apartments, Near Azad Society, Ambavadi, Ahmedabad 380015:
Joined by the other 15 members of Prkruti Parivarla Nature Club, I set up the camp at Ranthambhore National Park (Rajasthan) from 13th to 16th of this month. This was the first occasion to spend three days and three nights in the heart of the jungle which is famous for its tigers. In this scrub and grassland jungle one can see tigers, panthers, wild pigs, bears, bluebills, sambhars, hares, chitals and muggurs. However, being a birder, I enjoyed these moments much more by watching some sixty four types of birds, besides the animal sighting.

On our first morning on 14th, we put the chairs in the lobby of the rest house - Jogimahal and set for the birding. In front of us was a lake with glassy water two opposite banks of which were covered by waterlily and other floating vegetation. In these bunches of leaves, I detected a pair of moorhens (*Gallinula chloropus*), 3-4 bronze winged jacanas (*Metopidius indicus*) including one immature; a pheasant tailed jacana (*Hydrophasianus chirurgus*) in breeding plumage and a pair of white breasted waterhen (*Amaurornis phoenicurus*).

There were little egrets (*Egretta garzetta*) and smaller egrets (*Egretta intermedia*) on the opposite bank accompanied by two painted storks (*Mycteria leucocephala*) and a grey heron (*Ardea cineria*). A small rock in the water was appearing like the back of a giant turtle. On this rock were two herons, namely purple heron (*Ardea purpurea*) and pond herons (*Ardea grayii*) just near to the muggur. Five-six dabchicks (*Podiceps ruficollis*) and the little cormorants (*Phalacrocorax niger*) were common, while the darter (*Anhinga rufa*) was seen once.

There were three types of terns i.e. whiskered tern (*Chelidonias hybrida*), indian river tern (*Sterna aurantia*) and black bellied tern (*Sterna acuticauda*). I got a golden chance to see the fishing technique of the river tern. The bird I saw, after catching a victim did not simply swallow but released it thrice and caught it in mid air in order to swallow it head first. The 'helicoptering' pied kingfishers (*Ceryle rudis*) and colourful white breasted kingfishers (*Halcyon smernensis*) were the regular visitors to this lake. Remarkably, no other wagtail than the resident large pied (*Motacilla maderaspatensis*) one was present which was flying and singing from the lily leaves and small stumps. There were plain sand martins (*Riparia paludicola*) skimming on the water surface and the house swifts (*Apus affinis*) were flying rapidly in the air.

There were three huge banyan trees nearby Jogimahal. There were noisy flocks of Alexandrine parakeets, but every time I failed to see the maroon patch on the shoulder because the birds hid behind the leaves. I am sure that the birds were large Indian parakeets (*Psittacula eupatria*) (?) as they were constantly uttering a deep, long and monotonous call like tree....tree.... Jungle babblers (*Turdoides striatus*), common mynas (*Acridotheres tristis*), jungle crows (*Corvus macrorhynchos*), redvented bulbuls (*Pycnonotus cafer*), black drongos (*Dicrurus adsimilis*), golden orioles (*Oriolus oriolus*), tree pies (*Dendrocitta vagabunda*) and magpie robins (*Copsychus saularis*) were common everywhere in the jungle.

One morning, we the campers, climbed the ridge to see the Ganeshmandir and the ruined ancient fort. In this fort with rocky and leafy and leafy habitat, I spotted four new species. A pair of the crested bunting (*Melophus lathamii*) in grass tuft under heavy black stone, a pair of brown rock chat (*Cercomela fusca*) on the broken wall, grey tits (*Parus major*) and the Indian longbilled vulture (*Gyps indicus*) on the hill. Besides these new species there were blossom headed parakeets (*Psittacula cyanocephala*) and white bellied

drongos (*Dicrusus cacrutescens*) in the trees and a pair of dusky crag martin (*chirundo concolor*) on the top of the cliff. Near the gate of the fort once I saw a spotted dove (*Streptopelia chinensis*) and a ring dove (*Streptopelia decacocks*) feeding on the ground while a little brown dove (*Streptopelia senegalensis*) was also spotted on other occasions.

The dangers of the panther did exist everywhere in the jungle and so nobody was allowed to roam everywhere except a short distance track from Ranthambhore fort to Jogimahal rest house. In this area small flock of white throated munias (*Lonchura malabarica*) was chirping from a thorny plant and purple sunbird (*Nectarinia asiatica*) was seen occasionally. However, to satisfy myself I tried to watch the birds in deep jungle during our tiger sighting safari! The jeep was stopped to see the tiger and so I could manage to watch a yellow throated sparrow (*Petronia xanthocollis*), and the spotted owlet (*Athens bramas*) jungle spotted owlet (?) on the leafless branches of the trees. It may be important to note that on 15th I saw the redstart (*Phoenicurus phoenicurus*) which flew from a small plant very near to our jeep flashing its black and red plumages. This is the latest sighting of this bird for me. Peacocks, peahens and grey partridges (*Francolinus pondicerianus*) were crossing the tracks now and again. On the other lake I spotted the small flocks of mallard ducks ibises (*Threskiornis aethopica*), black winged stilts (*Himantopus himantopus*), white ibises (*Threskiornis aethopica*) and red wattled lapwings (*Vanellus indicus*). Once a spotted sandpiper (*Tringa glariola*) flashing its white rump and smoky brown wings was also spotted once an ashy crowned finch lark flew from the sandstone.

Some of the birds like white eyes (*Zosteropus palpebrasa*) the large or blue throated barbet, the tailor bird (*Arthotomus sutorius*), and the white browed fantail flycatcher (*Dicrusus cacrutescens*) were identified by their songs only.

No other bird of prey was seen than the honey buzzard (*Pernis ptilorhynchus*) and a vulture called white scavenger (*Neophron percnopterris*).

However I was expecting to see the serpent and bonelli's eagles, different types of babblers, various quails and partridges, the jungle fowls and the fishing owl, but they disappointed me.

However the checklist of 64 birds, in just three days, in a very limited walkable area and in the company of the campers, not knowing much about birds is I think not disappointing. At the end of this trip my lifelist contains round about 178 bird species. Yes, I enjoyed the jungle!

Bird strikes by Thomas Gay, 122/4-A, Erandavane, Pune 411004:
There they were, assembled from every corner of India at Paksimmar Airport in the first week of November. Foreign-returned ducks and cranes from beyond the Himalayan snows; vultures and hites and eagles; swifts, sandgrouse, skylarks, all the birds that man, in his airborne arrogance calls 'Pests' or even 'murderers'. And to show their solidarity with these criminals, all the little harmless birds - munias and robins, bulbuls and sunbirds, ioras and tailor-birds which had never dreamed of treacherously attacking unarmed civil aircraft.

To King Peacock's call they came, covering the runways so thick that the Flight Controller was forced to declare the airport closed 'until further notice'.

⊗ In his opening speech delivered in ^{front} form of a gigantic photograph of Lord Archaeopterix - the earliest bird of all - His Majesty stressed 'the twisted logic whereby our featherless friends talk of bird strikes as though each fatal encounter between bird and plane were solely due to the former's unprovoked aggression. In their own crowded cities, X he asked, 'do they talk of a pedestrian want only assaulting a speeding truck or a cyclist deliberately hurling himself ⊗ at a municipal bus?' X

Dramatically pointing to the photograph behind him; 'he was here millions of years before men stopped living in caves', he screamed; 'it is Man, not Bird, who is the trespasser, the aggressor!!'.

⊗ Thereafter, the meeting was thrown open to suggestions from the audience. These, conveyed in a chorus of whistlings, flutings, chatteringings, chirrupings, quackings and cluckings, were many and various. They ranged from Kamikaze assaults on every aircraft approaching Paksimmar to fouling the status of national leaders, and to Brain-fever bird commandos who would rightly perch outside every window and make all sleep impossible.

X At last, from an Ashy Wren-warbler came a proposal which was soon carried unanimously. 'They talk of Bird Strikes', she cried in her ringing tones, 'so let us all - simply go on strike! Let us solemnly declare that unless this communal harassment stops forthwith, all birds will depart for, say, the Isles of Lakshadweep'.

x
x A Horned Owl drafted the declaration in legal form, a Golden-backed Woodpecker inscribed it on a piece of papyrus which a common swallow had brought with him from Egypt, and every bird affixed its 'signature'.

x
x The document was entrusted to a House-sparrow, who flew through the open window of the Control Tower and dropped it on the head of the Duty Officer where he sat morosely drinking coffee. 'What's this rubbish', he cried, 'all covered in bird mess', and threw it into an incinerator.

All day the birds waited in the cold sunshine for the reply that never came. Soon after nightfall, the air was filled with a roar of wings like the sound of a jet plane. And next morning India awoke to a birdless world.

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ಜನರ ಬದುಕು ಹಸನಾಗಿಸಲು ಎಡೆಬಿಡದ ಯತ್ನ

ಮೂವತ್ತೆಂಟು ವರ್ಷಗಳ ಹಿಂದೆ ಭಾರತ ಪರಾಧೀನತೆಯ ನೋಗವನ್ನು ಕಿತ್ತಿಸಿದ ಸ್ವಾತಂತ್ರ್ಯದ ಉಸಿರು ಪಡೆಯಿತು. ಅದು ನಮ್ಮ ಇತಿಹಾಸದಲ್ಲಿ ಮಹತ್ವಪೂರ್ಣವಾದ. ಉಲ್ಲಾಸದಾಯಕ ಕ್ಷಣ; ಪ್ರತಿ ವರ್ಷವೂ ಈ ದಿನ ಸಂಭ್ರಮದಿಂದ ಆಚರಿಸುವ ಉತ್ಸವ. ಮೂವತ್ತೆಂಟು ವರ್ಷವೆಂದರೆ ದೀರ್ಘಕಾಲವೇ. ಈ ಅವಧಿಯಲ್ಲಿ ನಮ್ಮ ದೇಶ ಸಾಕಷ್ಟು ಪ್ರಗತಿ ಸಾಧಿಸಿದೆ.

ಹೌದು, ನಮ್ಮದು ಆತೀತಯವೆನಿಸುವ ಸಾಧನೆ. ಆದರೆ ಬಡತನ, ನಿರಕ್ಷರತೆ, ನಿರುದ್ಯೋಗಗಳಂತಹ ಭೀಕರ ಸಮಸ್ಯೆಗಳನ್ನು ಇನ್ನೂ ಬಗೆಹರಿಸಬೇಕಾಗಿದೆ. ಸಮಾಜದ ಬಹಳಷ್ಟು ಜನ ಬದುಕಿನ ಮೂಲಭೂತ ಅಗತ್ಯಗಳಿಂದ ವಂಚಿತರಾಗಿದ್ದಾರೆ, ಸ್ವಾತಂತ್ರ್ಯ ನಮಗೆ ತಂದು ಕೊಟ್ಟಿರುವ ಪ್ರಯೋಜನಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ಇವರಿಗೂ ದೊರೆಯುವಂತಾಗಬೇಕು, ಹಾಗೆ ಆದಾಗ ಮಾತ್ರ ಸ್ವಾತಂತ್ರ್ಯ ಸಂಪೂರ್ಣವಾಗಿ ಅರ್ಥಪೂರ್ಣವಾದೀತು, ಇದನ್ನು ಗಮನದಲ್ಲಿಟ್ಟುಕೊಂಡೇ ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ಸರ್ಕಾರ ವಿವಿಧ ಯೋಜನೆಗಳನ್ನು ಜಾರಿಗೆ ತಂದಿದೆ. ಎಲ್ಲವೂ ಸಮಾಜದ ದುರ್ಬಲ ವರ್ಗಗಳ ಬದುಕು ಉತ್ತಮಗೊಳ್ಳಲು ನೆರವಾಗುವಂತಹ ಯೋಜನೆಗಳು.

○ ಹಳ್ಳಿಗಳಿಗೆ ಕುಡಿಯುವ ನೀರಿನ ಸೌಲಭ್ಯ

○ ಸಮಗ್ರ ಬಾಲ ವಿಕಾಸ ಯೋಜನೆ

○ ವಿಧವೆಯರಿಗೆ ಮಾರಾಸನ

○ ಅಂತೋಡಿಯ ಯೋಜನೆಯ ಮೂಲಕ ಪ್ರತಿಯೊಂದು ಗ್ರಾಮದಲ್ಲಿಯೂ ಆಯ್ಕೆಗೊಂಡ ಬಡಕುಟುಂಬಗಳಿಗೆ ಧನ ಸಹಾಯ

○ ಮಹಿಳಾ ಕೃಷಿ ಕಾರ್ಮಿಕರಿಗೆ ಹೆರಿಗೆ ಭತ್ಯೆ

○ ಬಡವರಿಗೆ ಉಚಿತ ಕಾನೂನು ನೆರವು

○ ಮಕ್ಕಳಿಗೆ ಉಚಿತ ಪಠ್ಯ ಪುಸ್ತಕಗಳು

ಬಡ ಜನರಿಗೆ ಹೆಚ್ಚು ಪ್ರಯೋಜನವಾಗಲೆಂದೇ, ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ಸರ್ಕಾರವು ಇನ್ನೂ ಮೂರು ಹೊಸ ಯೋಜನೆಗಳನ್ನು ಜಾರಿಗೆ ತರುತ್ತಲಿದೆ.

“ ತಾಳಿ ಭಾಗ್ಯ ಯೋಜನೆ ”

ಬಡ ಕುಟುಂಬಗಳ ಯುವಕ ಯುವತಿಯರು ಕನಿಷ್ಠ ಖರ್ಚಿನಲ್ಲಿ ಮದುವೆಯಾಗಲು ಅನುಕೂಲವಾಗುವಂತೆ ರೂಪಿಸಲಾದ ಯೋಜನೆ ಇದು.

ಈ ಯೋಜನೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ವಧೂವರರು ಪಡೆಯುವುದೆಂದರೆ:

○ 1 ಗ್ರಾಂ ತೂಕದ 22 ಕ್ಯಾರಿಟ್ ಚಿನ್ನದ ತಾಳ / ಮಂಗಳ ಸೂತ್ರ, ತಾಳಯಿನ್ನೇ ಉಪಯೋಗಿಸಿದ ಮದುವೆಗಳಾದರೆ, ರಾಷ್ಟ್ರೀಯ ಉಳಿತಾಯ ಸರ್ವಿಕ್ವಿಕ್ಟ್‌ಗಳ ರೂಪದಲ್ಲಿ ರೂ. 200ನ್ನು ನೀಡಲಾಗುವುದು.

○ 50 ರೂ. ಬೆಲೆಯ ಎರಡು ಪಂಚೆಗಳು.

○ 100ರೂ. ಬೆಲೆಯ ಎರಡು ಸೀರೆ, ಎರಡು ರವಿಕೆ ಖಣಗಳು.

“ ಕಡಮೆ ಬೆಲೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ಉಡುಗೆಯ ನೀಡಿಕೆ ”

ಅಕ್ಟೋಬರ್ 2, 1985ರಿಂದ ಪ್ರಾರಂಭವಾಗುವ ಈ ಯೋಜನೆಯ ಮುಖಾಂತರ ಬಡ ಕುಟುಂಬಗಳಿಗೆ ಸೇರಿದ ಸ್ತ್ರೀ ಪುರುಷರಿಗೆ ರಿಯಾಯಿತಿ ದರಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ಬಟ್ಟೆಬರೆಗಳನ್ನು ಕೊಡಲಾಗುವುದು.

○ ರೂ. 25ಕ್ಕೆ ಹೆಂಗಸರ ಎರಡು ಸೀರೆ, ಎರಡು ರವಿಕೆ ಖಣ ಪಡೆಯಬಹುದು.

○ ರೂ. 25ಕ್ಕೆ ಗಂಡಸರ ಎರಡು ಪಂಚೆ ಹಾಗೂ ಒಂದು ಪರ್ಟ್ ಬಟ್ಟೆ ಪಡೆಯಬಹುದು.

ಇವನ್ನು ಒಂದು ವರ್ಷದ ಅವಧಿಯಲ್ಲಿ ಎರಡು ಕಂತುಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ಕೊಡಲಾಗುವುದು.

“ ಉಚಿತ ಯೂನಿಫಾರಂ ಯೋಜನೆ ”

ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ರಾಜ್ಯೋತ್ಸವದ ದಿನವಾದ ನವೆಂಬರ್ 1, 1985ರಿಂದ ಪ್ರಾರಂಭವಾಗುವ ಈ ಯೋಜನೆಯಲ್ಲಿ

○ ಸರಕಾರಿ ಶಾಲೆಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ಮೊದಲನೆಯ ಹಾಗೂ ಎರಡನೆಯ ತರಗತಿಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ಓದುತ್ತಿರುವ ಎಲ್ಲಾ ಮಕ್ಕಳಿಗೆ, ಮತ್ತು

○ ಸರಕಾರಿ ಶಾಲೆಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ಮೊದಲನೆಯ ತರಗತಿಯಿಂದ ಹಿಡಿದು ಏಳನೆಯ ತರಗತಿಯವರೆಗೆ ಓದುತ್ತಿರುವ ಪರಿಶಿಷ್ಟ, ಜಾತಿ / ಪರಿಶಿಷ್ಟ, ಬುಡಗಟ್ಟಿಗೆ ಸೇರಿದ ಎಲ್ಲಾ ಹೆಣ್ಣು ಶಾಲಾ ಮಕ್ಕಳಿಗೆ

ಹೊಲಿದು ಸಿದ್ಧಪಡಿಸಿದ ಎರಡು ಜೊತೆ ಶಾಲಾ ಯೂನಿಫಾರಂಗಳನ್ನು ಉಚಿತವಾಗಿ ನೀಡಲಾಗುವುದು.

ಈ ಯೋಜನೆಯಿಂದ ಒಟ್ಟು 21,84,000 ಮಕ್ಕಳು ಪ್ರಯೋಜನ ಪಡೆಯಲಿದ್ದಾರೆ.

ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ಸರ್ಕಾರವು ಸಮಾಜದ ದುರ್ಬಲ ವರ್ಗಗಳ ಜನರ ಏಳಿಗಾಗಿ ಬಹುಮುಖ ಪ್ರಯತ್ನ ನಡೆಸುತ್ತಿದೆ. ಅವರ ಜೀವನವನ್ನು ಉತ್ತಮ ಪಡಿಸುವ ಉದ್ದೇಶದಿಂದಲೇ ಹಲವಾರು ಕಾರ್ಯಕ್ರಮಗಳನ್ನು ಹಮ್ಮಿಕೊಂಡಿದೆ. ದುರ್ಬಲ ವರ್ಗಗಳವರ ಜೀವನ ಹಸನಾದರೆ—ಅವರೂ ದೇಶದ ಪ್ರಗತಿಯ, ಸಮೃದ್ಧಿಯ ಪಾದಿಯಲ್ಲಿ ಮುನ್ನಡೆಯಬಲ್ಲರು—ಅಲ್ಲವೇ?

Cover Picture: BARN OWL (TYTO ALBA) — Courtesy E. HANUMANTHA RAO

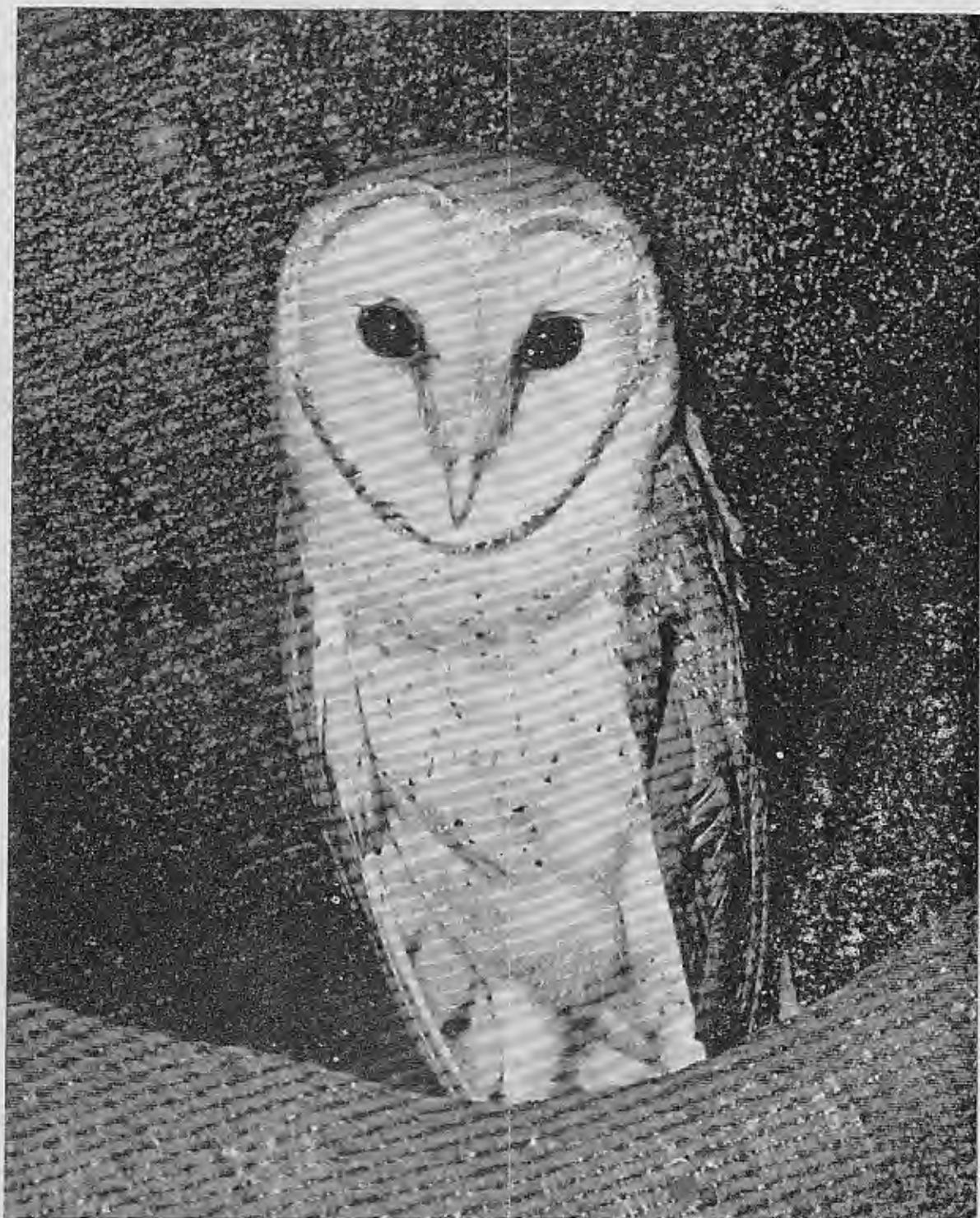
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Newsletter for Birdwatchers

VOL XXV NO. 11 & 12 NOV. - DEC. 1985



ಪ್ರಥಮ ವಿಶ್ವ ಕನ್ನಡ ಸಮ್ಮೇಳನ

ಕರ್ನಾಟಕಕ್ಕೆ ತನ್ನದೇ ಆದ ಭವ್ಯ ಪರಂಪರೆಯಿದ್ದು, ಅದರ ಹಿನ್ನೆಲೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ಉಜ್ವಲ ಭವಿಷ್ಯದತ್ತ ಮುನ್ನಡೆದಿದೆ, ಸಾಹಿತ್ಯ, ಸಂಸ್ಕೃತಿ, ಭಾಷೆ, ವಿಜ್ಞಾನ, ಕಲೆ ಇತ್ಯಾದಿ ಕ್ಷೇತ್ರಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ಗಮನಾರ್ಹ ಪ್ರಗತಿಯನ್ನು ಸಾಧಿಸಿದ ಸಂತ್ಕಪ್ತಿ ಕನ್ನಡ ಜನತೆಗೆ ಇದೆ.

ಕಾರಣಾಂತರಗಳಿಂದ ದೇಶ, ವಿದೇಶಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ನೆಲೆಸಿರುವ ಕನ್ನಡಿಗರನ್ನು ಒಟ್ಟುಗೂಡಿಸಿ, ಅವರ ನಿಕಟ ಸಂಪರ್ಕ ಬೆಳೆಸಿ ಕೊಳ್ಳುವಲ್ಲಿ ಇಟ್ಟ ಮೊದಲ ಹೆಜ್ಜೆ ಪ್ರಥಮ ವಿಶ್ವ ಕನ್ನಡ ಸಮ್ಮೇಳನ.

ವಿಶ್ವ ಕನ್ನಡ ಸಮ್ಮೇಳನದ ಅಂಗವಾಗಿ ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ಸರ್ಕಾರವು ಕೆಲವು ಶಾಶ್ವತ ಯೋಜನೆಗಳನ್ನು ಹಮ್ಮಿಕೊಂಡಿದೆ.

ಮೈಸೂರಿನಲ್ಲಿ ವಿಶೇಷ ರಂಗಮಂದಿರ: ಸಾಂಸ್ಕೃತಿಕ, ಸಾಹಿತ್ಯ ಮತ್ತು ರಂಗ ಚಟುವಟಿಕೆಗಳನ್ನು ನಡೆಸಿಕೊಂಡು ಬರಲು ಭವ್ಯ ರಂಗ ಮಂದಿರದ ನಿರ್ಮಾಣ.

ವಸ್ತು ಪ್ರದರ್ಶನ ಕಟ್ಟಡ: ಮೈಸೂರಿನಲ್ಲಿ ವಸ್ತು ಪ್ರದರ್ಶನಕ್ಕೆಂದೇ ಶಾಶ್ವತ ಭವನ ನಿರ್ಮಾಣ.

ಅತಿಥಿ ಗೃಹಗಳು: ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ಪ್ರಸಿದ್ಧಿ ಪ್ರವಾಸೀತಾಣವಾದ ಮೈಸೂರು ನಗರದಲ್ಲಿ ಪ್ರವಾಸಿಗರ ಅನುಕೂಲಕ್ಕಾಗಿ ಅತಿಥಿ ಗೃಹಗಳ ನಿರ್ಮಾಣ.

ಪುಸ್ತಕ ಪ್ರಕಟನೆ: ಪ್ರಾಚೀನ ಮತ್ತು ಆಧುನಿಕ ಬರಹಗಾರರ ಕೃತಿಗಳನ್ನು ಪ್ರಕಟಿಸಿ, ಕಡಿಮೆ ದರದಲ್ಲಿ ಓದುಗರಿಗೆ ಒದಗಿಸಿ ಕೊಡುವ ಯೋಜನೆಯಡಿಯಲ್ಲಿ ಈಗಾಗಲೇ 117 ಪುಸ್ತಕಗಳನ್ನು ಪ್ರಕಟಿಸಲಾಗಿತ್ತು, ಸಮ್ಮೇಳನದ ಅಂಗವಾಗಿ ಮತ್ತೆ 50 ಪುಸ್ತಕಗಳ ಪ್ರಕಟನೆ.

ಜಿಲ್ಲೆಗೊಂದು ರಂಗಮಂದಿರ: ರಾಜ್ಯದ ಎಲ್ಲಾ ಜಿಲ್ಲಾ ಕೇಂದ್ರಗಳಲ್ಲೂ ರಂಗ ಚಟುವಟಿಕೆಗಳ ಬೆಳವಣಿಗೆಗಾಗಿ ರಂಗ ಮಂದಿರಗಳ ನಿರ್ಮಾಣ, ಅದರಂತೆಯೇ ತಾಲ್ಲೂಕು ಕೇಂದ್ರಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ಬಯಲು ರಂಗಮಂದಿರಗಳ ನಿರ್ಮಾಣ.

ಏಕಿಧ ಸಂಘ ಸಂಸ್ಥೆಗಳಿಂದ ವಿಚಾರ ಸಂಕಿರಣಗಳು, ಕನ್ನಡ ಪುಸ್ತಕಗಳ ಪ್ರದರ್ಶನ, ವ್ಯಂಗ್ಯ ಚಿತ್ರಗಳ ಪ್ರದರ್ಶನ.

NEWSLETTER
FOR BIRDPWATCHERS

Vol. XXV No. 11 & 12

November-December 1985

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Editorial:

Looking forward to 1986: I am afraid I have let you down in 1985, and hope I can do better in the next year. May I request all of you to let me have your names and addresses again, so that I can have a new list prepared, hopefully without mistakes.

Also, please send your subscriptions of Rs.15/- for 1986. We managed to cover expenses this year because of advertisements, and I hope I can count on the same support in the coming year, other wise the Rs.15/- will not cover costs.

The file on pending articles has touched a new low, and I would like to request our stalwarts, Lavkumar Khacher, Tasj Mundkar, Prakash Gole, Ranjit Daniels, Indrakumar Sharma, Prof.K.K.Neelakantan, Thomas Gay, Anil Mahabal, V.Santharam and some others who have been our regular contributors to make an extra effort and help to ensure that the pending articles file is full to the brim again. Meanwhile I wish you all a happy New Year.

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Azad Memorial Lecture by Dr. Salim Ali: Most of you must have seen copies of this Azad Memorial Lecture by Dr.Salim Ali; but for those who have not I intend to reproduce it in sections in the Newsletter. I know that Salim is being worked to death, but his speeches and articles are always worth reading.

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A proposed Field Guide to The Birds of India by Collins: There is a proposal by Collins to prepare a Field Guide to the Birds of India. I wonder if some of you would care to comment on how this effort should be structured. What really is the kind of book which will help fill the most needed gap in the ornithological literature of our country.

Could you also suggest the names of some upcoming artists who are capable of making accurate drawings of our birds.

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Laboratory work on birds by Dr. Asha Chandola, Dept. of Zoology Garhwal University, Garhwal, Srinagar: There is a valid complaint that Indians are more interested in working in the laboratory than in the field. There are some however, who are interested and competent in both areas, and one such person is Dr. Asha Chandola, Dept. of Zoology, Srinagar.

I have received two interesting papers from her, one on Environmental Manipulation of Seasonal Reproduction in Spotted munia, and the other on Control of seasonal reproduction in Tropical weaver bird. I will be glad to send xerox copies to those who are interested.

In the paper relating to weaver birds it is stated that "the increasing day lengths in spring bring about growth and development of the gonads and in turn sex steroids cause development of the accessory sex organs and appearance of secondary sex characteristics (e.g. blackening of the beak of males). However, the reproductive climax is reached only after the first monsoon showers when the birds suddenly leave the forests and begin to look for nesting sites. Our field data show that in the event of an early or a late monsoon nest building, courtship and egg laying are also shifted accordingly. It is therefore clear that while photoperiod initiates and causes gonadal maturation the final trigger for reproduction is given by rainfall. The monsoon brings an ample food supply in its wake and this lasts long enough for all the reproductive processes to be completed in time. Why then do weaver birds use photoperiod and not rainfall as the cue for gonadal growth? Perhaps the answer lies in the relative unreliability of the monsoon which can arrive a few weeks early or late". In the next paper relating to the spotted munia, the monsoon period is again crucial for nest building. "The precise timing of the reproductive phase of the annual cycles requires prediction of the most favourable season well in advance of the reproductive climax, i.e., nest building and egg-laying, thus allowing sufficient time for the growth of the gonads. In house crow (*C. splendens*) common myna (*A. tristis*), common babbler (*Turdoides terricolor*), roseringed parakeet (*Psittacula krameri*), blossom-headed parakeet (*Psittacula cyanocephala*), redvented bulbul (*Pycnonotus cafer*), weaver bird (*Ploceus philippinus*), black drongo (*Dicrurus macrocercus*) and cattle egret (*Bubulcus ibis*) gonadal development begins in spring culminating in a final reproductive effort in June/July. In these instances the monsoon supplies the so called supplementary information to bring reproduction to its finale".

Birds of Mundanthurai Plateau, Tamilnadu by AJT John Singh, WS Sunderraj, K.Shankar, J.Joshua, A.Desai, N.Siva Ganesan:

Mundanthurai Plateau is situated in Mundanthurai Wildlife Sanctuary, Tamilnadu, at an altitude ranging from 180 to 200 meters. The area of the plateau is around 60 sq.km. and has different vegetation types such as the thorny scrub jungle, dry deciduous forest, monoculture plantations of teak and Eucalyptus and riverine forests along the rivers Tambiraparani and Servalar. The waters of these rivers are stored in the lower Pabanasam Dam which is at the northern end of the plateau.

The riverine forests of the plateau once had a continuity with the evergreen forests of the higher altitudes of the catchment areas of the two rivers. The continuity was, however, broken by the construction of the Upper Pabanasam dam across the river Tambraparani (1938-43) and by the on-going construction of the Servalar dam (1974) which is nearing completion across the river Servalar.

In the sixties some areas of the plateau were cleared of natural vegetation and planted with Santalum album, Ailanthes excelsa and Ceiba pentandra. These plantations, however, were a failure as a result of serious browsing by sambar Cervus unicolor the common cervid of the plateau. In some of these areas the regeneration of the Natural is successful, but in the Deer valley (1.25 sq.km.) which is characterised by intense cattle grazing and repeated forest fires the secondary vegetation is mostly of Dichrostachys cinerea, Helicteres isora and Cymbopogon citratus.

As a result of these modifications the plateau has a mosaic of various habitats such as areas with scanty vegetation, areas with dense secondary vegetation, plantations, natural forests, riverine forests, rivers and a dam. Consequently the diversity and abundance of bird species is rich and over a period of 15 months in an area of 30 sq. km. on the plateau we have recorded 158 species of birds representing 110 genera and 40 families (Table 1). Had we done this study aided with mist nests possibly we would have added some more species to the list. One conspicuous

feature of the avifauna of this area is the occurrence of five species of king fishers.

With the Sevalar dam nearing completion we believe that the days for the plateau are over. One problem which causes great concern for us is the growing demand for firewood from the town Vickramasingapuram which has a population of 50,000 people and is situated immediately next to the plateau. Unfortunately fuel wood plots around this town are ruled out because of the absence of sufficient marginal land for growing large patches of firewood trees. Nevertheless this problem needs the urgent attention of the Tamilnadu Government to make Mudanthurai plateau a heaven for birds and other wildlife.

Here is a list of the birds we saw, grouped in families:

Phalacrocoracidae (Cormorant, darter), Ardeidae (grey heron, little green heron, pond heron or paddy bird, smaller egret, little egret, night heron, black bittern) Ciconiidae (white stork, painted stork), Accipitridae (black winged kite, pariah kite, brahminy kite, shikra, sparrow hawk, long legged buzzard, Japanese buzzard, crested hawk-eagle, booted hawk eagle, Tawny eagle, black eagle, grey headed fishing eagle, Egyptian or scavenger vulture, king vulture, crested serpent eagle, osprey), Falconidae (laggar falcon), Phasianidae (grey partridge, red spurfowl, painted spurfowl, grey jungle fowl), Turnicidae (little bustard quail, common bustard quail), Rallidae (white breasted waterhen), Charadriidae (red-wattled lapwing, yellow-wattled lapwing, little ringed plover, common sandpiper, pintain snipe), Columbidae (grey fronted green pigeon, yellow legged green pigeon, Indian ring dove, spotted dove, little brown dove, blue rock pigeon, emerald or bronze winged dove), Psittacidae (Roseringed parakeet, blossom headed parakeet, Indian lorikeet), Cuculidae (Red winged crested cuckoo pied, crested cuckoo, common hawk-cuckoo, large hawk-cuckoo, or brain fever bird, Indian cuckoo, Indian plaintive cuckoo, koel, small green billed malkoha, sirkeer cuckoo, crow-pheasant or coucal), Strigidae (Collared scops owl, eagle-owl or great horned owl, brown fish owl, brown hawkowl, brown wood owl), Caprimulgidae (Longtailed nightjar, common Indian nightjar), Apodidae (Alphin swift, house swift, crested tree swift), Alcedioidae (Lesser pied king fisher, common king fisher, storkbilled king fisher, white breasted kingfisher, blackcapped kingfisher), Meropidae (Chestnutheaded bee-eater, green bee-eater), Coraciidae (Indian roller), Upupidae (Hoopoe), Bucerotidae (Malabar grey hornbill, Great pied hornbill), Capitonidae (large green barbet, small green barbet, crimsonbreasted barbet or coppersmith),

Picidae (lesser golden backed woodpecker, Indian golden backed threetoed woodpecker), Puffidae (Indian pitta), Alaudidae (singing bush lark, redwinged bush lark), Hirundinidae (striated or red rumped swallow house martin), Laniidae (Gray shrike, bay backed shrike, brown shrike), Oriolidae (Golden Oriole), Dicruridae (Black drongo or king crow, grey or ashy drongo, white bellied drongo), Artamidae (Ashy swallow-shrike), Sturnidae (great headed myna, black headed or brahminy myna), Corvidae (common myna, Indian tree pie, house crow, jungle crow), Campephagidae (common wood shrike, large cuckoo-shrike, black headed cuckoo shrike, scarlet minivet), Irenidae (common iora, goldmantled chloropsis of leaf bird), Pycnonotidae (white browed bulbul, yellow browed bulbul, black bulbul), Muscicapidae (spotted babbler, rufousbellied bannler, yellow eyed babbler, jungle babbler, white headed bannler, brown breasted flycatcher, red breasted flycatcher, tickoll's blue flycatcher, whitebellied blue flycatcher, paradise flycatcher, blacknapped flycatcher, franklin's wren-warbler, jungle wren-warbler, tailor bird, blyth's reed warbler booted warbler, grphean warbler rufous bellied shortwing, magpie-robin, black redstart, Indian robin, blue rock thrush, orange headed ground thrush), Sittidae (Velvetfronted Nuthatch), Motacillidae (Paddy field pipit, forest wagtail, grey wagtail, large pied wagtail), Dicaeidae (Tickell's flowerpecker), Neoteriniidae (purple rumped sunbird, small sunbird, loten's sunbird, purple sunbird), Ploceidae (House sparrow, white throated munia, black headed munia).

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White Stork in Rajkot by K.L.Mathew, Ajit Govindan and Dr. B.M. Parasharya, Dept.of Biosciences, Saurashtra Univ. Rajkot 360005, Gujarat: The white stork (*Ciconia ciconia*) is a winter visitor to Gujarat where they are seen in small numbers (Ali and Ripley 1968). Dharmakumarsinghji (1955) considers the white stork as a fairly rare bird. But, contrary to this, recently Varu (1981) has reported having seen 40 to 50 birds in Kutch.

Very little information is available on the wintering habitat of this stork. However, Karat et al (1981) have provided some basic information on its roosting habit. In this connection I wish to make available additional information on the possible arrival dates of this bird in Gujarat.

It was on 1 October 1983 at 7.45 am that one of us observed three storks preening on the top of a hillock behind our Department in the University Campus. Again at 8.30 am they were moving around and occasionally making feeding attempts. All these birds, one by one, took short flights and landed at nearby places to feed. At about 8.45 am all the birds flew away towards the south-east (probably to Nyari dam).

Soon after the sun set at 6.43 pm on the same day these three birds came back from the direction in which they had gone in the morning, flying low and landed behind the hillock. Again on 6 October 1983 the storks arrived from the same direction in similar fashion. To watch them closely on their roosting sites, we had gone to the hillock before the birds arrived. There were four storks all flying low and they reached the site just before sun-set. They alighted on a check dam adjacent to the hillock. Two of these birds were pure white while the other two were dull in colour with some greying tinge. Probably they were juveniles. All the four birds stood in the water first and fed by keeping their bills open in water and walking forward which is termed as forward ploughing. After a while the birds spent their time in preening or standing on either one or both legs. Since it was almost dark, we presume that the birds remained in the tank for the whole night. Earlier, Karat et al. (1981) observed the white stork roosting on the hillocks, on two occasions. This time we had an opportunity to witness the storks roosting in a shallow water tank. This bird might have developed the habit of roosting on the hillocks or in water tanks for greater safety and to keep themselves away from attack.

The next morning, instead of taking off straightaway from the roosting ground, they moved around the feeding ground before they took to their wings. The lingering around the feeding could be attributed to the diet rhythm of the insects (especially orthoptera) on which they chiefly feed. The cattle egret (*bubulcus ibis*) which is chiefly insectivorous has also been observed to leave their place well after sun rise, especially during the cold winter months.

In mid-September, one of the students in our Department collected a carcass of a white stork from the Departmental garden. We strongly suspect that it was one of the group we saw roosting. This indicates that this species arrived in Rajkot well before mid-September

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Birding in Lakshadweep by S.Theodore Baskaran, National Defence College, 6 Tees January Marg, New Delhi 110011:
Lakshadweep, about 300 km. off Cochin, is an exciting birding spot. This archeplago, lying scattered in a north-south line, comprises of 21 coral islands of which only some are inhabited. It is not very expensive to get there. The Lakshadweep Administration have organised attractive package tours. You get an opportunity to see many oceanic birds, which are hard to come by on the mainland.

The first bird we logged was the lesser frigate bird. As we approached Minicoy, the southernmost island, we saw a flock of them in flight. The white abdomen that can be clearly seen as the bird banks, is diagnostic. In Thilakam, an uninhabited islet near Kalpeni island, we saw a large variety of waders feeding on the exposed sea bed at low-tide. There were curlews, whimbrels, golden plovers, common sand-pipers and crab plovers. There were two grey herons also and I could get quite close to them. Compared to the waders that visit the mainland these seem to be quite tame.

Bitra is another island that sustains a lot of birds. Robinson, a westerner, who visited the island in 1868 records that there were thousands of birds here. When he visited the island it had not been colonised by man. Now though it is inhabited still there are a lot of birds to be seen, particularly varieties of terns.

However, we missed out on the main ornithological interest here, the bird sanctuary at Pitty island. The tide was not favourable for landing on this barren island bereft of any vegetation and surrounded by rocks but where thousands of sooty terns and noddy terns nest. (the latter is the state bird of Lakshadweep). Some of the islanders used to land here and collect the eggs from the sand floor in hundreds. In 1964 the island was declared a sanctuary.

Major Alcock of the Indian Medical Service who visited this island in the 20's has left interesting observations in his book "A naturalist in the Indian Seas". He says "From the ship it looked like barren sand and nothing moved, but as our landing party drew near, the boat suddenly became enveloped in a dense crowd of shrieking sea birds. On landing we found every foot of the ground above high water mark literally carpeted with young terns of two species, many living and nearly fully fledged, many dead and rotting and many reduced to clean-picked skeletons with only the quill feathers still sticking to wing bones. There were no traces of nests or of any materials out of which the nests could have been made, so that the parent birds must have laid and hatched their eggs on the bare sand. We soon discovered that one great cause of the wholesale destruction of the young birds was the ferocity of swarms of large hermit crabs (Coenobita) for again and again we found recently killed birds in all the beauty of their first speckled plumage being torn to pieces by a writhing pack of these ghastly crustaceans".

Those of you who are interested in a check-list of the birds of Lakshadweep can try your luck with the Bombay Natural History Society. I learn that a team visited these islands in 1963. Among other birds, they spotted the Antarctic skua and Wilson's stormy petrel.

There are other delights in the islands.....snorkling in the lagoons, a ride in the glass-bottomed boat to watch the colourful coral reef fishes and a crystal clear night sky to gaze at the stars.

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Bird Watching
consultants (P) Ltd., 201 Surya Nam
Hauz Khas, New Delhi 110016: I happened to spend
of April 1985 in Khartoum on a UNESCO mission and witnessed
the peaceful revolution and change of government on
6 April 1985, when power was transferred from one man
rule of President Numeiri to the promised peoples government
with a democratic parliamentary system.

I stayed in the Sudan hotel which is located along the
bank of the river Blue Nile. It was news to me that the
river Nile took its name only after Khartoum, and before
that it divided itself into two Niles, one called the
White and the other the Blue Nile. Khartoum is located at
the confluence of the two Niles and it reminded me of our
Prayag (Allahabad) located on the 'Sangam' of Ganga and
the Yamuna.

I used to go for my morning and evening walks along
the river bank and through the parks located alongside and
watch the birds that crossed my way or fly over on both
sides. The most conspicuous was the Sacred ibis with a
black bill and a white body and in India I would call it
a white ibis. The other prominent bird was the ring necked
dove which is slightly larger in size than the Indian ring
dove. Bulbuls were also common but they had white vents
and the red, or yellow vented or white cheeked bulbuls
do not seem to exist in Sudan. The Indian house crow and
common myna, so abundant in India, were significantly
absent in Khartoum though the house crow is said to exist
in Port Sudan which is about 700 km away on the red sea
where it was introduced from India. The common myna does
not appear to exist in Sudan since there is no mention
of this bird in the authoritative book on Birds of the
Sudan by Col. Francis O Cave and James D. Mac Donald.

A list of birds spotted by me with my naked eye (not
having the binoculars) during my stay is given below:

1. Little bee eater (*Melittophagus pusillus*)
2. Reed cormorant (*Phalacrocorax africanus*)
3. Ring necked dove (*Streptopelia capicola*)
4. Long tailed dove (*Oena capensis*)
5. Little egret (*Egretta garzetta*)
6. Sacred ibis (*Threskiornis aethiopicus*)
7. Kite (*Milvus migrans*)
8. Marabow (*Leptoptilos crumenifera*)
9. Brown mousebird (*Colius striatus*)

10. Spurwinged plover (*Hoplopterus spinosus*)
11. Ringed plover (*Charadrius hiaticula*)
12. White vented bulbul (*Pycnotus barbatus*)
13. Hoopoe (*Upupa epops*)
14. Black and red shrike (*Linarius erythrogaster*)
15. Wire-tailed swallow (*Hirundo smithia*)
16. White wagtail (*Motacilla alba*)
17. Beautiful sunbird (*Nectarina pulchella*)
18. Rock pigeon (*Columba livia*)
19. White (necked) stork (*Ciconia ciconia*)
20. House martin (*Delichon urbica*)
21. Pied kingfisher (*Ceryle rudis*)

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Birds dominant in the Thar Desert by Dr. Indra Kumar Sharma (edited by Dr. Kumar Ghorpade): The little brown dove (*Streptopelia senegalensis*) and the Indian ring dove (*Streptopelia decaocto*) are the commonest birds in and around the Thar Desert. Possible reasons for their abundance there are: 1) They have no paucity of food and thrive on all types of grass seeds as well as those of some herbs and shrubs; 2) They are very tolerant of the arid environment with extreme temperatures and poor water availability. The longtailed streaked babbler⁺ (*Turdoides caudatus*) is the next most abundant bird. It is omnivorous, fairly tolerant to high and low temperatures and able to acquire necessary water from insect food. It is also a social bird and thus has a better searching ability for food as well as protection against its enemies.

In the gravelly, arid biotope, the Indian Robin (*Saxicoloides fulicata*) is third in abundance, thrives on small insects and is well adapted to an arid biotope. The Indian sandgrouse (*Pterocles exustus*) is also present in fair populations (where not hunted), thriving on seeds of grasses and herbs, being very hardy to the adverse arid environment. It covers large areas in search of food and water.

Around villages and human habitation in the desert, the house sparrow (*Passer domesticus*), house crow (*Corvus splendens*), blue rock pigeon (*Columba livia*) and the Indian peafowl (*Pavo cristatus*) exist in large populations. The house sparrow thrives on food grains around farms and

⁺This is often called the "Common Babbler". As I have pointed out (1974, *J. Bombay nat. Hist. Soc.*, 70: 523), we need to give up using "Common" (many bird species are not common throughout their range!) as an adjective to a bird name and use a more descriptive word(s) to preclude ambiguity. Like I had suggested (*News1. Birdwatchers*, 1974, 14(9): 6-7) we also need to have a standard list of English names for our birds, available in S.D. Ripley's SYNOPSIS (1961)--K.D.G.

houses, as well as on kitchen waste, and is well adapted to live in such environments. It has 3 or 4 broods each year and nests during February to June and again from September to October each year. The house crow also thrives on kitchen scrap, etc., around human dwellings and breeds profusely here. The blue rock pigeon enjoys protection and feeding by villagers and is well adapted to live and breed here. It has about 4 broods each year and the domestic cat is the only potential predator. The peafowl also enjoys protection and feeding by the locals and thrives in high populations here. It has one clutch of eggs in July/August, only around three eggs hatching (out of 4-8 laid), the others robbed and eaten by the domestic cat and the pariah dog.

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Crane and goose workshop for Indian ornithologists: It is proposed to organise a Workshop on Cranes and Geese for Indian ornithologists. Bird-watchers who are interested in participating should send their names and addresses to the undersigned. They will be informed about the venue and other details of the Workshop at a later date. The Workshop will be scheduled probably in January or February 1986.

Scientific papers and notes on distribution and ecology of Cranes and Geese from the Indian sub-continent are welcome. Photographic material including transparencies and posters, maps and charts may also be displayed during the Workshop. Artists are welcome to send paintings depicting cranes and geese.

Besides discussions and presentations, the participants are expected to decide whether to form a Working group of crane and geese researchers to continue research and conduct action-oriented programmes for crane and geese conservation, to appoint monitors all over India to monitor their numbers and conditions of their wintering and breeding habitats and to keep effective communication with like-minded groups abroad.

Please write to : PRAKASH GOLE, 1B ABHIMANSHREE SOCIETY OFF PASHAN ROAD, PUNE 411 008.

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AZAD MEMORIAL LECTURE 1978 BY Dr. SALIM ALI ON BIRD STUDY
IN INDIA: ITS HISTORY AND ITS IMPORTANCE

I feel deeply honoured at being invited by the Indian Council for Cultural Relations to deliver this annual Azad Memorial Lecture for 1978. At the same time I feel rather overawed when I look over the formidable list of my eminent predecessors in the series, and the learned topics on which they had discoursed. However, though I cannot vie with them in profundity I can perhaps try to tell you something about the subject that has continued to fascinate me through a long life of bird watching, but which has eluded a deeper and more general interest in the public because of its allegedly elitist nature, and may be also because of its relevance to human life being not so patently obvious. Since this lecture is in memory of a great man whose learning and scholarship, no less than his humanism and statesmanship have left such an indelible mark on our culture and nationalism, I may be permitted to begin with a personal digression. In the year 1948 when I happened to be engaged on a field survey of the bird fauna of the erstwhile Orissa states comprising the Eastern States Agency, I received a lunch invitation from Mr. Asif Ali, then Governor of the State, to meet Maulana Sahab, then the Union Minister for Education, who was visiting Cuttack on tour. I was delighted at the prospect because shortly before this I had been reading in camp with much delectation and many a chuckle Maulana Azad's inimitable essay 'Chirya Chiray ki Kahani' in his admirable Urdu classic Ghubar-e-Khatir written during his long incarceration in Ahmadnagar goal which began on 9 August 1942 as aftermath of the 'Quit India' resolution passed by the Indian National Congress under his Presidentship. As many here today may know, the narrative concerns a pair of House sparrows who had made up their minds, as determinedly as only house sparrows can to build their nest in a hole above the Maulana's bed in his prison room. The pair worked assiduously all day long bringing in straws and rubbish and attempting to stuff it into the selected hole, but succeeded only in dropping most of the litter on to the bed below. When, after several days, the birds remained undeterred by the active retaliatory measures the owner of the bed took to dissuade and dislodge them--not all perhaps strictly non-violent by text-book definition -- he was finally compelled to admit defeat. Thereafter he adopted a different policy, one of friendly appeasement, and by patience and perseverance succeeded to such an extent that

he actually got the birds, and others of the jail sparrow community (not the other jail birds!) even to perch on his shoulder and to peck grain from his palm. This intimate familiarity fanned his interest in the sparrows and prompted him to record his penetrating observations on the temperament, idiosyncracies, social behaviour and marital relations of each individual with an insight that would do justice to a trained naturalist. He classified different individuals according to their various qualities, and the humour and incisiveness of the descriptions with the chasteness of his Urdu diction eruditely interlarded with appropriate Persian couplets reeled off from a prodigious memory make them a rare treat to read. For example, one of his more bouncing visitors he distinguishes by the name of 'Mulla' and puckishly described his qualifications as 'argumentative, garrulous, quarrelsome, and one who managed to elbow himself to precedence over newcomers and sermonized (an elevated perch)'. Then, in the same puckish strain he asks "What other name could be given to such a character?".

In describing the nest-feeding activities of the parent birds in his prison cell, the Malana quotes the findings of 'an ornithologist' on the average number of daily visits a pair of sparrows makes with food for the nestlings. When I first read the account I liked to recognise that ornithologist as myself, and to think that the information may have been culled from my own Book of Indian Birds. Talking to his personal secretary at this Cuttack meeting years later, I learnt that my surmise was indeed correct. He had got his statement out of a copy of the above book lent him in Ahmadnagar fort by his fellow-prisoner Jawaharlal Nehru-- himself a keen bird student and nature lover! I am happy to recall that lunch meeting with Maulana Sahab in the context of today's lecture, the pleasant conversation we then had about birds, and the lively interest he showed in the subject. But to come to my thesis. Perhaps a brief historical review of bird study in India from ancient times up to the present may help to provide a correct perspective. I am not aware of any ancient treatises on Indian birds, as such, which describe their attributes and external characters in sufficient detail to permit their identification with certainty, except perhaps in the case of the commoner species that figure prominently in mythology, legend or folklore -- such as crow, parakeet, koel, peacock, and some others. In any case a direct assessment of their worth as 'scientific' text would be beyond me since I am no scholar of Sanskrit or Pali. However,

the English translation of the Sanskrit text of a book Mriya-Pakshi-Sastra or 'Science of Birds and Animals' by Hamsadeva, said to be a Jain author of the 13th century A.D. the only work of this kind known to my friend Shri Harinarayan Acharya of Ahmedabad, himself an erudite Sanskrit scholar and a competent ornithologist -- is not impressive. Its bizarre descriptions, often comically vague and amusing, perhaps rendered more so by the translator's special brand of English, are not very revealing. For example, what is ostensibly meant to be the Saras Crane is described as follows: "They are very tall, having long legs, red beaks and white bodies. Their stomachs and rear portions are stout. Their wings are broad and big. They are a little impatient when they are hungry. They eat small fish, fruits, lotus trunks and roots and others. They often dive in water and play. They generally enjoy during nights. They fly in the sky with their couples. They perch on the cool trees at the time of wearisome sic/. They are much afraid of the rear of lions and tigers and they run away to distant places. They are fond of swimming even in the floods and they have smooth feathers. They have a little passion".

The other source of information regarding Indian birds of the pre-Moghul period are the several lexicons of Sanskrit words, though these are not very helpful in identifying the species either. Some names are based on calls, i.e., they are onomatopoeic like KaKa for the crow (which says 'ka . . ka'); others are based on coloration, habits, gait, methods of feeding, and so on. Some names are identifiable easily enough, while others are obscure. Perhaps the only person who has attempted to identify birds from such Sanskrit names was the late Dr. Raghuvara in his publication Indian scientific Nomenclature of the birds of India, Burma and Ceylon, 1949. With varying -- often dubious -- success he identifies some 250 Sanskrit words with known species of Indian birds. Some of his conclusions, however, are distinctly far-fetched! Classical Sanskrit literature occasionally makes specific mention of Bird Migration, as for example the migration of geese (hamsa) -- wrongly rendered as 'swans' by many commentators -- to lake Manasa (Manasarovar). The poet Kalidasa, a close observer of bird behaviour -- described the migratory habits of two species of geese, Raja-hamsa (Barheaded) and Kadamba (Grey-lag) as accompanying the rain clouds on their way from the Vindhya to the Himalayas.

The Indian Koel and its habit of brood-parasitism was well known to the Vedic seers, and described unambiguously

in sanskrit literature. Interestingly enough this appears also to be the earliest record of avian brood-parasitism, since it was described many centuries before Aristotle (384-322 B.C.) or his immediate colleagues or predecessors began to write about the European Cuckoo.

The Maghul Emperors, at least from Babur to Shah Jahan, were renowned aesthetes and lovers of Nature in all its forms. Among them the two most outstanding naturalists were Babur and his great-grandson Jahangir. Some of the accounts they have left behind of the habits and behaviour of the birds that came under their personal observation are so apt that they could scarcely be bettered for incisiveness and scientific accuracy today. What is the more creditable about these royal naturalists is that they do not rely on mere hearsay but make a clear distinction in their writings between their personal observations and what has been reported to them by others. For instance, while describing the Monal Pheasant, Babur writes with subtle humor "A remarkable circumstance is told of them. It is said that in winter they come down to the skirts of the hills, and if in their flight one of them happens to pass over a vineyard he can no longer fly and is taken." He then continues "God knows the truth. Its flesh is very savoury". Mark here the clear distinction between what God knows and what the Emperor can personally testify!

The outstanding features of Jahangir's character were his love of Nature and his powers of observation. It has been rightly said of him that had he been head of a Natural History museum he would have been a better and happier man. His Memoirs are replete with observations on birds and other animals written with an accuracy and insight that would do credit to a modern student of bird behaviour and ecology. He has, for instance, some extremely useful and interesting notes on the breeding habits of the Saras crane from the time of their pairing onward and till the eggs were hatched, that are in complete accord with present day knowledge. Jahangir established and patronized a school of animal painting at his court headed by the famous Ustad Mansur, honoured by the Emperor with the title of Nadir-ul-Asr. Whenever an unfamiliar or exotic bird or beast was brought to him, Jahangir first studied it carefully for its characteristics before describing it in his Memoirs. Immediately thereafter he caused it to be painted by Ustad Mansur or one of his school to serve as supporting illustration. Since the Emperor's reputation as a lover of birds and animals had spread far and wide throughout

the world, foreign emissaries accredited to the Moghul court vied with one another to bring him as nazer or peshkash the strangest and rarest birds and beasts from their respective countries for the Imperial menagerie. In this way was built up the unique collection of exquisite animal portraits which, on the disintegration of the Moghul Empire gradually got scattered and, largely through loot and skulduggery, found its way to unexpected and far-flung corners of the earth. Among the bird portraits attributed to Ustad Mansur, but which is certainly the handiwork of one of his school and period, is a painting of a Siberian or great white crane. At the present time this crane is one of our rarest and most endangered species with a total world population of perhaps no more than 250 individuals. A significant section of this population, 70 birds or so, visits the Keoladeo Ghana Bird Sanctuary of Bharatpur every winter between November and March to add to the glory of this princeless natural wetland. The interesting point about this painting -- fortunately still in the collection of the Indian Museum, Calcutta -- is that it was executed between the years 1616 and 1620 A.D. and thus nearly 160 years before the bird was actually 'discovered' and described for western science (in 1773) by the Russian zoologist Pallas from the swamps bordering the Ob and Irtysh rivers in USSR! Another bird painting, a miniature, of Jahangir's period and though unsigned and undated clearly of the Mansur school has the unique distinction of being one of the only two drawings ever made from life of the Mauritius Dodo (Raphus cucullatus L.) which became extinct in 1681. The portrait is considered by experts to be the most scientifically accurate one in existence of that flightless pigeon-like bird which first became known to Europeans in 1598 and was so completely exterminated in less than a hundred years by the hungry sailors of visiting ships and the rats and domestic animals introduced by them on the island. This remarkable painting had lain in oblivion in the Institute of Orientalistics of the USSR Academy of Sciences until stumbled upon by Dr. A. Ivanov of the Leningrad Zoological Museum. He brought it to the notice of ornithologists gathered in Helsinki for the 12th International Ornithological Congress in 1958 and caused quite a sensation. Strangely enough, and contrary to his usual practice, there is no mention of the dodo in Jahangir's Memoirs, and whence and how the living specimen came to be available for painting seems a mystery. A plausible explanation has been suggested by me elsewhere (in Alvi, M.A. and A. Rahman 1967, Jahangir the Naturalist). Jahangir's Memoirs ended in 1624, three years before his

death. The dodo must have come into Jahangir's possession and been painted during the blank period and hence it unfortunately finds no mention in the chronicle. It is on record that two live specimens of the Mauritius Dodo were kept at the East India Co.'s factory in Surat where the chronicler Peter Mundy first saw and described them in 1628, i.e. 11 months after Jahangir died. It seems more than likely that the miniature represents one of these same birds. Or it could even be that there was a third bird in this batch which had been presented to Jahangir by the Surat factory before his death as an ingratiation gesture, knowing the Emperor's passion for strange and exotic creatures.

Foreign adventurers and travellers to India in the closing years of the Moghul Empire, towards the end of the 18th century and the beginning of the 19th, had carried back with them as novelties from time to time to various European museums small collections of the skins and eggs of Indian birds. Sporadic collections had also been assembled by servants of the East India Company for its own museum in Calcutta in various newly purloined territories of the insidiously expanding British Indian Empire. But scientific ornithology, more or less as understood today may, for practical purposes, be said to commence with the publication of the two volumes of Jardon's classic Birds of India between 1862 and 1864. In this work the author bestowed an English name on all the birds of India largely based on British analogies. While many of them are reasonably appropriate, others have gone through numerous attempted improvements by successive authors. It is to be hoped that English nomenclature has at last attained near-stability with the latest publication, the 10-volume Handbook of the Birds of India and Pakistan by Salim Ali and S. Dillon Ripley, 1968-73. The standardization of vernacular bird names for all-India use still remains an urgent need in order to satisfy the demand for popular bird books in the regional languages.

One of the earliest of the 'modern' accounts of Indian birds was actually published in 1713 by Edward Buckley, an East India Company surgeon in Madras, with descriptions and drawings of 22 birds found in and about Fort St. George. Several other bird collectors and writers followed during the rest of the century, many of whom have left their mark on Indian ornithology either by describing newly discovered birds, or having such novelties named after them, and in other ways. The first serious attempt at

recording the avifauna of a definitive region in India in a scientific journal (Proc. Zool. Soc., London) was a paper in 1831 by a Capt. James Franklin, a geologist who had undertaken expeditions in the Central and United Provinces to study the rocks in the Vindhyan Hills, and incidentally to collect birds for the Asiatic Society. He collected some 200 birds of 156 species, of which 30 he described as new.

Among the early writers on Indian birds before the publication of Jerdon's Birds of India another specially notable one was Col. W. H. Sykes who came out to India in 1803 aged 13, and, believe it or not, received a commission in the Bombay Army. He saw a great deal of service in the Marata wars, and collected birds in the Bombay Deccan. His well-known paper "A Catalogue of the Birds of the Deccan" was published in the Proceedings of the Zoological Society, London in 1832. He described a number of new species many of which he named after Hindu deities such as Milyus govinda for the Pariah kite, Hiopolaia rama for a Tree warbler Petrocinchla pandoo for the blue rock thrush, Hypsipetes ganeesa (after Ganesh) for the southern black bulbul, and others. There were several other similar active field workers, mostly civil or military officials, in the employ of the E. I. Co. scattered widely over different parts of the country during the first six decades of the 19th century. But the period was dominated by the virtual Founders of Indian ornithology, namely Brian Houghton Hodgson, (first assistant British Resident and later Resident, at the court of Nepal between 1820 and 1844), Edward Blyth and Curator of the Asiatic Society of Bengal's museum, Calcutta from 1841-62 whose writings did more for the extension of natural history studies in India than any other -- and Thomas Caverhill Jerdon, a surgeon in the Madras Army of the East India Co.'s establishment. John Gould, the taxidermist of the Zoological Society, London, was the first to make known birds from the Himalayas from a small collection of skins he had acquired between 1825 and 1830. Most of the birds were new and Mrs. Gould made drawings of them which were described by N. A. Vigors and published in A Century of Birds from the Himalayan Mountains in 1832. In 1849 Gould commenced a sumptuous elephant folio work of coloured lithographs, Birds of Asia, but died before it was completed, and Dr. Bowdler Sharpe was responsible for the 7th (final) volume which came out in 1883.....

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